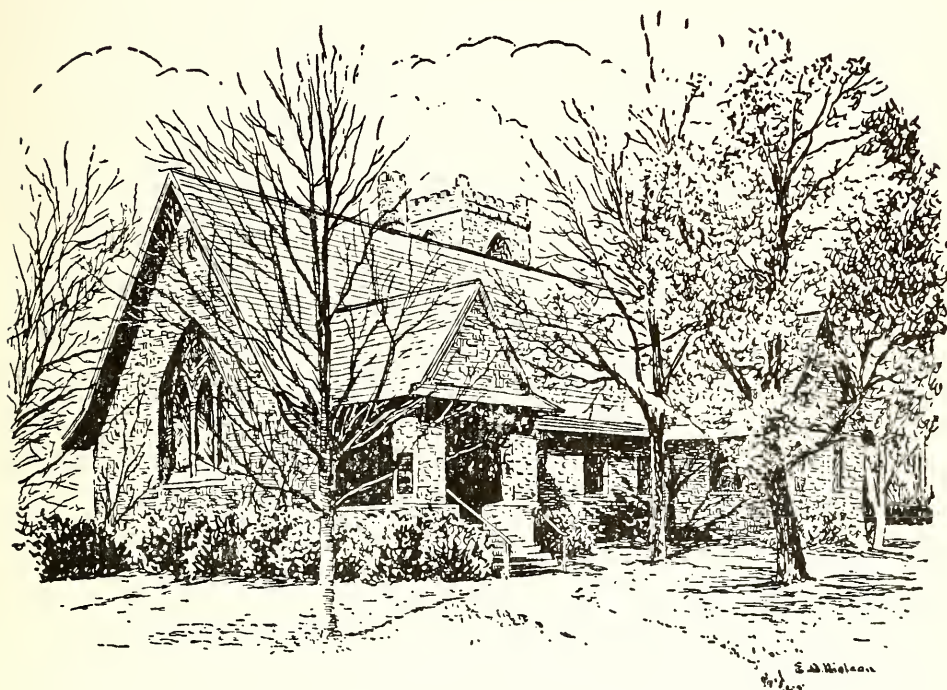


**A History
of
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Oxford, North Carolina**



1823-1980

"THE PAST IS TO ENRICH THE FUTURE."

ROBERT WINTERS, N.C. MUSEUM OF HISTORY

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THE
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
WELCOMES YOU



ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH
ESTABLISHED 1823
OXFORD, N. C.

**A History
of
St. Stephen's
Episcopal Church
Oxford, North Carolina**

1823-1980

By

Charles H. Brewer, Jr.

Historiographer

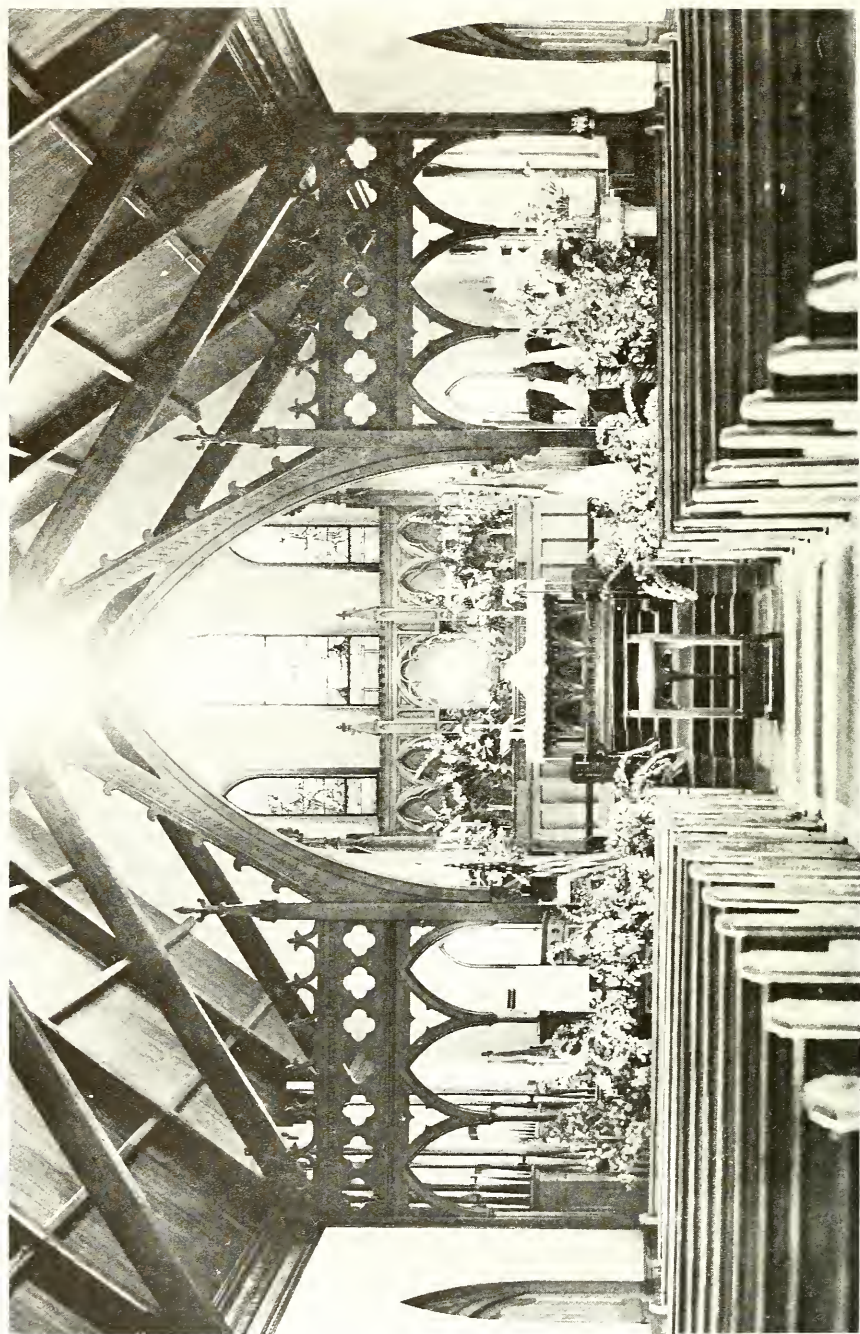


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“The fabric of American life is a seamless web. Everything fits in somewhere. History is a continuous process; it extends far back into the past, and it will go on — in spite of today’s uneasy qualms — far into the future. But always we intend to deal with the great, unfinished, and illogically inspiring story of the people doing and being and becoming.”

Bruce Catton

Foreword

St. Stephen's has a long and wonderful story to tell. But someone needed to gather up those caches of details about the deeds and the people who created our today.

For one of the oldest parishes in the diocese, this has never been done. Thus this history was born more out of an awareness of the need than for any pretensions of ability.

Lent is a wonderful season to catch up the loose ends of forgotten promises. I prefer to think of it as a season for "taking on" rather than "giving up." Lent inspired the discipline and the deadline for this history of St. Stephen's and the faith to attempt this publishing effort.

It has become a labor of love and appreciation; really, a matter of compiling and editing more than writing, for our records are good. It seems impossible to give proper credit for all the material. I acknowledge with special gratitude some of the sources in a special section at the back of this book.

Hopefully, I have been able to impart some of the why, as well as the who and when.

For the sins of omission and commission, I plead guilty. I invite your corrections and additions. I challenge future generations to keep these records accurate and complete; and to add worthy chapters of their own.

Read. Enjoy. In the following pages, may you discover, as I have, a renewed awareness and appreciation of our legacy which St. Stephen's.

C. H. B., Jr.
Lent, 1980

WE SEEM TO GIVE

them back to Thee, O God, who gavest them to us & Yet as Thou didst not lose them in giving, so do we not lose them by their return. Not as the world giveth, givest Thou, O Lover of souls. What Thou givest, Thou takest not away, for what is thine is ours also if we are Thine. And life is eternal and love is immortal, and death is only an horizon, and an horizon is nothing, save the limit of our sight. Lift us up, strong Son of God, that we may see further; cleanse our eyes that we may see more clearly; draw us closer to Thyself that we may know ourselves to be nearer to our loved ones who are with Thee. And while Thou dost prepare a place for us, prepare us also for that happy place, that where Thou art we may be also for evermore. & & & & & & &

Prayer used by Fr. Bede Jarrett, O.P.

Dedication

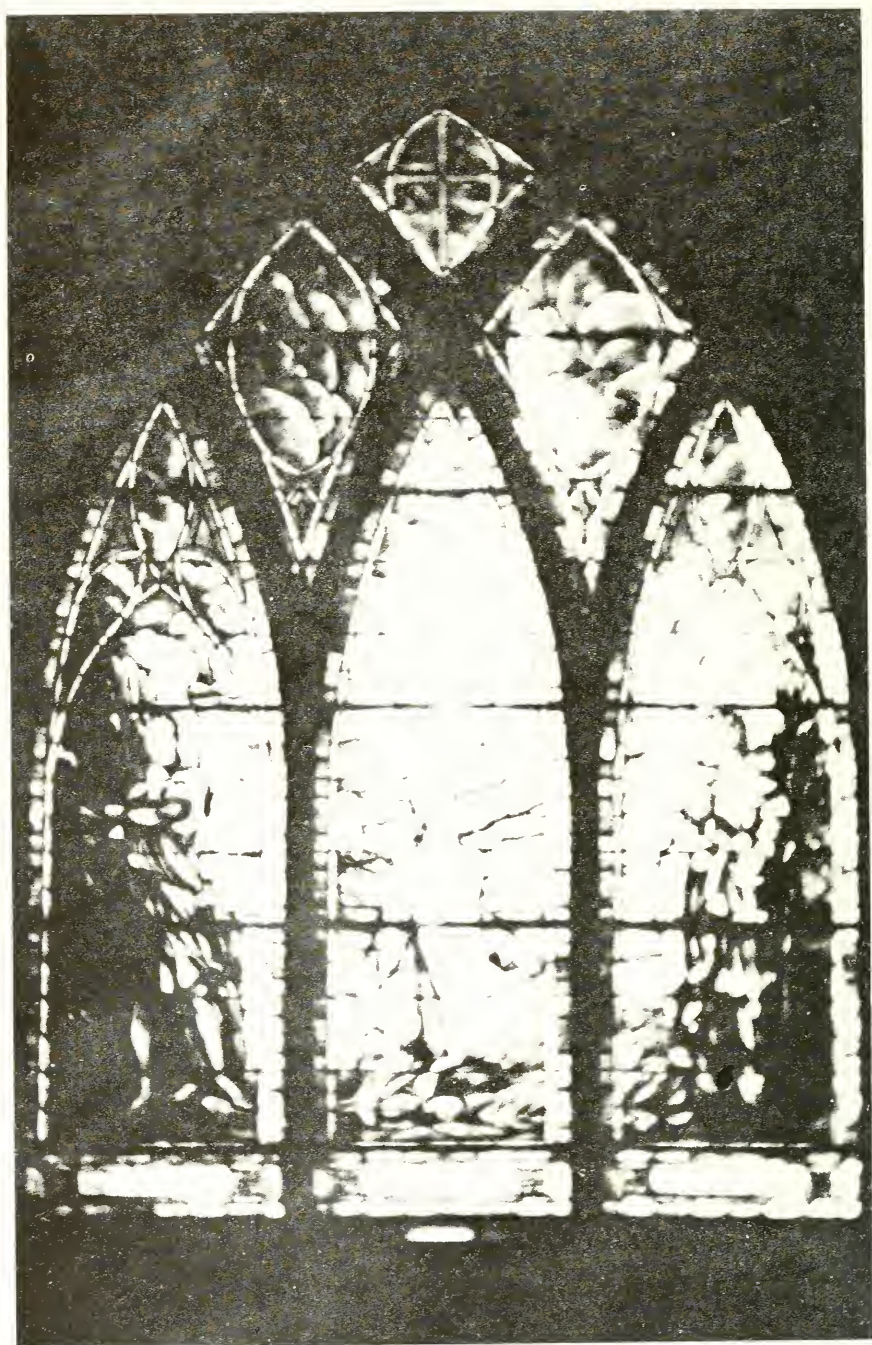
This history is dedicated to the generations of faithful members of St. Stephen's Church who "from their labors rest."

Our rich heritage is their gift in trust - the gift of faith, of example, of labor and of love. Truly, their's was the gift of unselfish loving service.

Especially are we grateful for the lives of the following members whose names were transferred in this past year of 1979 from the rolls of St. Stephen's Church for final inscription by Our Heavenly Father:

Charles M. Booth
Lucy K. Brewer
Annette S. Bryan
Henry P. Hall
Mary P. Hall
Tom W. Johnson
Leah G. Peoples
Benjamin P. Thorpe III

"Thou hast showed us, O Lord, what is good."



CHAPTER I

Historical Background

For more than 150 years St. Stephen's Episcopal Church has occupied an important place in the heart of Oxford - both literally and spiritually.

How this came about and the people who made it happen is the story of this book. It is a story of our heritage.

Let's begin our story with a bit of historical background, so that we can better understand and appreciate what this rich American Episcopal heritage really means.

ANGLICAN HERITAGE

The Anglican Church, like many of the early settlers of Granville County, finds its ancestry in England.

You may recall that when Henry VII defeated and killed Richard III, he effectively ended the War of the Roses and founded the Tudor dynasty.

His son Henry VIII, who reigned from 1509 until his death in 1547, broke ties with the Pope and assumed the title of Protector and Supreme Head of the Church and Clergy of England. [1] This was during a period of great religious revolution throughout Europe.

The short reign of the youthful Edward VI was notable for the formation of the rites and ceremonies of the English Church. Archbishop Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer was introduced in 1549 to bring uniformity of worship and it turned England into a Protestant nation, in spite of the efforts of Queen "Bloody" Mary, of the House of Tudor.

The outstanding Tudor reign, if not the greatest in English history, was that of Elizabeth I (1558-1603). She firmly established the Protestant faith. She was .

less successful in establishing her English colony of Roanoke Island, in what was described as "the goodliest land under the cope of heaven...where the soil was sweete, fruitful and wholesome."

Next came the Stuart line of monarchs, led by James I. They had a long series of disputes with Parliament, an institution of growing importance. The King James version of the English Bible, ordered in 1604 and published in 1611, became the basic Protestant Bible.

English adventurers were now beginning to establish settlements in the New World. In his instructions to the colonists, James I commanded that the leaders of the colony "with all diligence, care and respect doe provide that the true word, the service of God and the Christian faith be preached, planted and used." [2]

Under the Tudors, England had sought to steer a course between the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation by asserting the power of the government over religious organizations and the Church. With the destruction of the Spanish Armada in 1588, the Counter-Reformation had lost England forever; but the rivalry within England between Anglican and Puritan became open warfare with the outbreak of the English Civil War in 1642.

In matters of faith, the Anglican position was based on "scripture, antiquity and Reason." In refusing to base religious authority on one source alone, the Anglican position differed both from the Roman Catholic insistence on the final power of the Pope alone, and from the Puritan stress on the sole authority of the Bible. For the Anglican, the Bible, the traditions of the early Church, what Richard Hooker called the "light of Reason", available to anyone "having natural perfection of wit and ripeness of judgment", provided a three-fold foundation of the Anglican faith, and a balance of sources that could refine and support one another. [2]

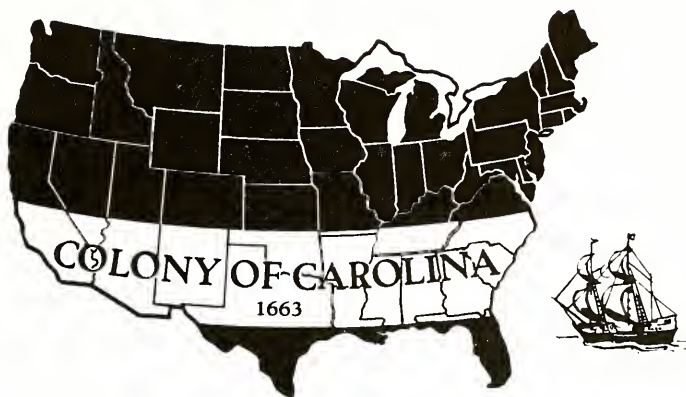
When James' son, Charles I, came to the throne, differences over religion were reaching the boiling point. He amplified the troubles with Parliament

and, coupled with his method of levying taxes, this precipitated the Puritan Revolution. Charles I was beheaded in 1649 and for over a decade the Cromwells were in charge of the new Commonwealth. The fledgling colonies were well aware of the religious conflict, but were buffered by distance and generally remained loyal to the King, especially our northern neighbor, Virginia, the "Old Dominion."

In 1660 Charles II was restored to his father's throne. For this he was indebted to many people. His majesty was approached on behalf of eight such loyal and generous men. Word of growing settlements south beyond the bounds of Virginia had reached London, and these men sought a grant of New World land which they might settle, Christianize, and make profitable for both the crown and themselves.

THE CAROLINA CHARTER

In 1663 Charles II rewarded these eight supporters by naming them Lords Proprietors of Carolina, giving them a tract of land that extended from the southeastern shore of Albemarle Sound to the Georgia-Florida state line. In the Carolina Charter, there was a section granting the colonists the rights of Englishmen, and additionally they were guaranteed rights of trade and freedom from taxation except "by and with the consent of the free people or the greater part of them."



And an entirely new subject was touched upon. Churches in Carolina, the Charter directed, were to be "dedicated and consecrated according to the ecclesiastical laws" of England. Nevertheless the Proprietors were given authority to grant "indulgences and dispensations" to those "who really in their Judgments, and of Conscience sake" could not conform to the ritual and beliefs of the Church of England. In accord with this provision, the Proprietors permitted all religious groups to follow their own forms of worship in Carolina.

They also forgot King James' dictum, "No Bishop, no King", and the church's failure to provide bishops for America weakened the ties between the colonists and the mother country.

No provision was made for resolving differences that might arise between the Lords Proprietors and the people, and this proved to be the undoing of the Proprietors in the northern part of Carolina. Many people who were already living there in 1663 had acquired their land from the Indians, and they were quick to resent the intrusion of outsiders, as they regarded the Proprietors.

While expansion was taking place, several of the governors sent over to administer their unruly domain attempted to improve the colony in another respect. The establishment of the Anglican Church, they believed, would benefit the people. Proper respect for form and order, the worship of God in decent surroundings, and the civilizing influence of the church, they concluded, would work wonders. Taxes were levied to support the church in the colony just as was done in England. Oaths were required of officeholders to support the church as well as the crown, as head of the church. Anglican clergy had the exclusive right to conduct marriages and collect fees for this service.

The eight absentee landlords and their successors, totaling forty-nine and including five women, never had a clear understanding of their possessions in America. They were both poorly informed and poorly advised. They attempted to implement a feudalistic

government on a colony where democracy had already taken root.

King George II had been on the throne just two years when he realized how bad the situation was in North Carolina. [3] In 1729 he acquired, for seventeen thousand pounds, the rights and land of all the proprietors except that of the Carteret family. Sir George Carteret had been one of the original Lords Proprietors. His descendant, the Earl of Granville, declined to sell, and received as his share of the whole, the Granville Grant, comprising the northern half of the colony of North Carolina which ran from the Atlantic Ocean west to the frontier, wherever that might be. This territory was soon divided into counties, one of which was Granville.

The Granvilles continued to hold their New World possession until it was lost at the time of the American Revolution. The State of North Carolina confiscated all English owned lands in 1780, but allowed all grants previously made to stand.

THE S P G

Toward the close of the 17th century the Bishop of London had sent the Reverend Thomas Bray (1656-1730) to America to study religious conditions. Upon returning to England, Dr. Bray reported in 1700 the immediate need for missionaries in the colonies and formed an organization to supply clergymen. This voluntary group of English churchmen was chartered in 1701 by King William III under the name, "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts", often called the SPG. From 1704 to 1782, the society supported thirty-three missionaries in North Carolina.

In a letter from one of the first missionaries sent by the Society, the Reverend John Blair, four "sorts of people" were described: Quakers, "powerful enemies of church government; those with no religion who would be Quakers if it did not compel them to live moral lives; a denomination something like Presbyterianism; and those really zealous for the interest of the church." This fourth group was said to be

the fewest in number but composed of the "better sort of people."

Another of these men was the Reverend John Urmstone, and his letters to the SPG during his tenure (1709-1721) give insight into the type of culture shock suffered by these early missionaries. He dares to describe North Carolina as "a hell of a Hole" where "this lawless people will allow no power or authority, either church or state, save that what is derived from them. The inhabitants of North Carolina are not industrious but subtle and crafty to admiration, always behaving insolently to their Governors... All the Governors that were ever in this Province lived in fear of the people (except myself) and dreaded their assembly."

While the Proprietors had provided for dissenters, mostly Quaker, Presbyterian, Baptist and Lutheran groups, Urmstone declared that "they dissent from everything that is called religion...this is a nest of the most notorious profligates upon earth." [4]

Perhaps there is comfort in noting that the Reverend Urmstone confined his preaching to the eastern part of North Carolina.

Granville County at this time was on the frontier of the English colonial settlement in America and encompassed what is now Granville, Vance, Warren and Franklin counties. Many of the founding families migrated over from the more crowded plantation development in Virginia.

In 1749 the Reverend Clement Hall, SPG missionary, reports a long journey from Edenton to Granville County, where he preached seven times, churched fifty women and baptized 184 children. The spiritual state of the men is not mentioned.

The Parish of St. John's had been established by the General Assembly of the colony in 1746, to have the same boundaries as Granville County. As Bishop Cheshire later described the process: "Each county, upon being constituted by the General Assembly of the Province, was also made a Parish; and the freeholders of the county were authorized on Easter Monday of each year, in an election held by the Sher-

iff of the county, to elect twelve vestrymen for the Parish; and the vestrymen were authorized to lay taxes for building churches, purchasing glebes and supporting the clergy." The first known Anglican church is reported to have been built in the Nut Bush community in 1757 by the Lewis family.

According to S. T. Peace in his Zeb's Black Baby, "many of the real, genuine, blue-blooded gentle folk of the county originated in old Nut Bush." He adds that "the spark of American freedom fanned early in old Nut Bush" where the ideas of freedom and self government were preached as early as 1765.

At the beginning of the year 1767, James McCartney, a native of Ireland, was employed to assist with the school in New Bern, then the capital. He continued in this capacity until May 1768 when he left for England to become a candidate for Holy Orders. Ordained as a minister of the Church of England, McCartney was licensed on July 25 by the Bishop of London for service in North Carolina, arriving back in the colony in November of that same year. Because of the climate, he decided the first of June 1769 to settle in Granville County. A few months after his arrival McCartney reported "that he has been cordially received by the people, and they still continue to make his life as agreeable as the situation of the place admits of." [6]

For several years McCartney served the Granville Parish faithfully and apparently with great vigor, for in 1771 we find him involved in the building of two new churches. One of these is historic St. John's Church, Williamsboro, replacing the earlier Nut Bush structure. The original "Articles of Agreement" between the Vestry and John Lynch, an undertaker of Mecklenburg County, Virginia, are in the Archives of the Episcopal Church. (Research continues to establish the architect of St. John's Church, reputed to be John Hawks of Tryon Palace fame.)

Another SPG missionary in the area was the Reverend Charles Cupples. Although an Englishman, he espoused the American cause and served as the State Assembly Chaplain in 1779 and 1780 and Chaplain in

the Halifax Assembly in 1781.

Promptly after the building program for the churches began, a large number of the men of the county protested to Governor Martin against the tax of twelve hundred pounds of tobacco, therewith to build the two new churches. This seems to be the first recorded religious impression made upon the men of the county.

At this time there were reported to be three Anglican congregations in the Granville circuit: Nut Bush at Williamsboro, one at Harrisburg (just east of present day Oxford), and the present day Banks Chapel, south of the Tar River.

At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War the rector of this latter chapel near Wilton was thrown out of his church for his loyalist opinions. After the peace, the Methodists entered into possession of the church building and it has continued in their control under the name of Banks Chapel ever since.

We can well appreciate the stigma that attached itself to everything British during the Revolution. This, of course, extended to the Established Church of England.

The number of clergymen immediately after the Revolution was cut almost to the vanishing point. Francis Asbury was a notable exception to the mass exodus when the war started. It is interesting to note that at the request of Asbury, an ordained Anglican priest, to John Wesley in England, the latter in February 1784 issued an ordination scroll to Thomas Coke as follows: "Whereas many of the people in the southern provinces of North America who desire to continue under my care, and still adhere to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, are greatly distressed for want of ministers to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper... Know all men, that I, John Wesley, think myself to be providentially called at this time to set apart some persons for the work of the ministry in America." [7]. With this special charge Coke returned to America and joined Asbury in founding what was to become the Methodist Church. Asbury's diary has numerous

detailed accounts of his traveling ministry in Granville County.

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH ORGANIZED

What was to become of the church and its members in America, devoted both to the ideals of the American Revolution and the traditions of their Anglican faith? Meetings on this difficult transition took place throughout the newly united colonies. As a result, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America was born in Philadelphia at the Convention of 1789 under the strong influence of the Reverend William White, host clergyman and chaplain of the Continental Congress. The Book of Common Prayer was adopted, changing the prayer for the King to the prayer for the President, but insuring a continuation of the familiar and beautiful forms of worship. Samuel Seabury, a priest from Connecticut, was consecrated in Scotland as our first Bishop in 1784.

As recorded at this first National Convention in 1789: "The Church of England, to which the Protestant Episcopal Church in these States is indebted, under God, for her first foundation and a long continuance of nursing care and protection...when in the course of Divine Providence, these American States become independent with respect to civil government, their ecclesiastical independence was necessarily included...in which it will also appear that this Church is far from intending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine, discipline, or worship; or further than local circumstances require."

The Anglican Church was permanently disestablished by the North Carolina State Constitution adopted in December 1776 at Halifax, N.C. No guarantee of religious liberty was contained in the Federal Constitution drafted in 1787 in Philadelphia, and North Carolina would not ratify the document until the first ten amendments, known as the "Bill of Rights," providing that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," was included.

Especially unsung have been the contributions of many Episcopal women who, during this period, continued to teach their children the catechism and to read the Prayer Book services in their homes for family and slaves long after many of their parish churches had closed.

An attempt was made to effect a diocesan organization of the church in North Carolina during the last decade of the 18th century and conventions with this purpose met in Tarborough in 1790, 1793, and 1794.

The Rev. Charles Pettigrew, Rector of St. Paul's Church, Edenton, and former SPG missionary, was chosen Bishop elect in 1794, but died before he could be consecrated, thus bringing to an end this first effort to organize an Episcopal Diocese in North Carolina.[8]

Pettigrew expected to attend the General Convention at Philadelphia in 1795 where he would have been consecrated. Five days before the time of the meeting in September, he set out toward Philadelphia, but found so many cases of yellow fever at Norfolk that he returned home. Indeed, there was so much yellow fever in the entire country that the convention was cancelled; as was the next triennial slated for 1798.

A special convention was called for June 1799 at Philadelphia, but because of poor health Pettigrew was unable to attend. For years he had suffered from tuberculosis. Without ever being consecrated Bishop, he continued to serve his parishioners, refusing to accept compensation, and to toil valiantly in home mission work until his death in 1807.[1] (It is worth noting that his grandson, the Rev. William Pettigrew, was rector of St. John's, Williamsboro from 1870 to 1900, serving ably there and among the surrounding congregations.)

In a list of the clergy of the Diocese, made about 1794 by Pettigrew, occurs the name of "the Reverend George Micklejohn of Granville." Micklejohn, an SPG missionary from Scotland, was appointed by Governor Tryon in 1766 to St. Matthews Parish, which included all of old Orange County. While there he preached a special sermon to the troops raised to

quell the Regulator rebellion. He also served The Chapel of Chapel Hill and in the neighboring parishes. At the outbreak of the revolution, he swore allegiance to the new government, and records show that he went to live with his old friend, General Thomas Person of "Goshen" and served for the next 30 years in the Granville area. Micklejohn later moved to Mecklenburg County, Virginia, where he died about 1818 reportedly to be 100 years old.

The organizing convention of the Diocese of North Carolina was held at Christ Church, New Bern, on April 24, 1817, attended by three ministers and six lay delegates. [9] From the Revolutionary War to this time there had been only six Episcopal candidates for Holy Orders in North Carolina.

During this time our fledgling diocese was under the care of Bishop Richard Channing Moore of Virginia. Moore, a native of New York, is reported to have been "winsome in manner, distinguished in descent, with a musical voice that brought crowds flocking to hear him preach." He was a leader in the Evangelical movement with emphasis on repentance and conversion - what today we associate more with the Southern Baptist Convention than with the Episcopal Church. At this organizing meeting the General Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States was adopted. As Bishop Cheshire later commented: "The work of the first Convention was simply to gather together and to organize the remains of the old colonial church in the several localities where it had been most successfully established."

The second Diocesan Convention was held in 1818 at Fayetteville and the third in Wilmington in 1819. In the journal of this meeting we find..."The Episcopal congregation of the Town of Williamsboro was regularly admitted into union with this convention, whereupon Mr. Wm. Green appeared as a lay delegate and took his seat." At the next convention at Edenton in 1820, Bishop Moore reported that the diocese is "now blessed with the labors of seven faithful men."

One such man was the Reverend John Phillips, a lay preacher sent from England to New Bern as one of

the Wesley brothers' lay preachers - ordained in 1814 by Bishop Moore of Virginia. Phillips was a missionary in this state between 1818 and 1822 and organized Episcopal churches in Tarboro and Warrenton. In 1820 he reported that he had traveled 220 miles a month. In addition to regular work at Tarboro, Warrenton, Washington and Chocowinity, he visited Hillsborough, Raleigh, Williamsboro, Oxford, Scotland Neck and rural congregations in Pitt and Beaufort Counties.

From strenuous travels and earnest endeavors Mr. Phillips' health failed about 1822. He returned to Virginia where he died in 1831.

In the Journal of the Convention of 1821 it is stated that a diocesan missionary, Mr. Thomas Wright, held services twice in Oxford during the summer of 1820. [9] The Reverend William Hooper, professor of languages at Chapel Hill, also reported that he had officiated at Oxford once. In 1822, the Reverend William Green, deacon, reported that he had officiated once a month at Warrenton, Halifax, Oxford and Raleigh.

The Right Reverend John Stark Ravenscroft (1772-1830) was elected and installed in 1823 as the first bishop of the permanently organized Diocese of North Carolina. This remarkable man, born in Virginia and bred in England and Scotland, was reported to have a voice "like the roaring of a lion" and a large and commanding personality. Ravenscroft, as contrasted with Bishop Moore, inclined to be more high church, being a follower of John Hobart who revived the church in New York. Anyone fascinated by characters in history would do well to study "Blackjack" Ravenscroft.

In Ravenscroft's first year there were reported to be 480 communicants and 7 clergymen in the diocese, with 200 baptisms. By 1831 there were 15 ministers and 809 communicants.

THE VESTRY SYSTEM AND WORSHIP

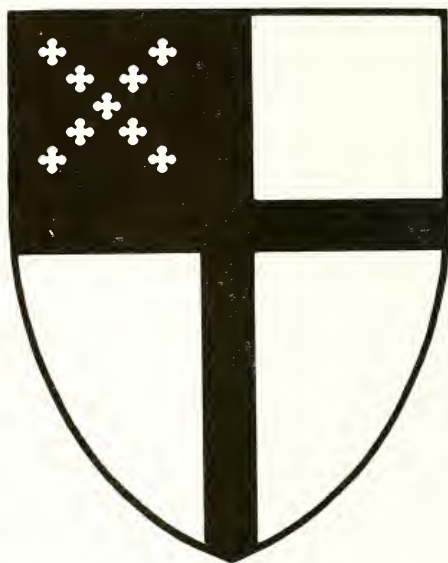
In closing these pages of our historical background it seems appropriate to mention briefly the form of worship and vestry system that distinguished the Anglican Church from other groups.

More than other Protestant services, Anglican worship emphasized liturgy. The Book of Common Prayer carefully prescribed the order of worship, the wording of the prayers and the movements of the worshipers. If no clergy were present a clerk could read the familiar service. The religious life of the colonial parishes involved practice as well as doctrine and used experience to communicate as well as words. The worshipers did not so much try to describe an inner light to each other, rather, they entered into a common experience. [2]

Responsibility for the local management of the colonial churches rested in the hands of the vestry. In addition to paying their ministers salaries, they set them up as planters with glebes and sometimes slaves. The vestry books that have been preserved from the colonial era reflect the continuing concerns of care for church property and matters of worship. But the vestries had more to do than that; the parishes they governed were also units of government that collected taxes, dispensed information about governmental matters, took care of the orphaned, sick and needy, and regulated the morals of the local community. For most purposes the vestries were free to run parish affairs, enjoying a practical independence while acknowledging that they were part of a greater whole to which they owed allegiance and loyalty. If they were proud, headstrong and grasping they were also flexible, devoted and capable. From their ranks came the leadership of the colony. It was from the colonial legislatures, filled with men who also served on parish vestries, that a great number of the founding fathers of America emerged. No generation in American history is so striking; none has so captured the fascination of both Americans and foreigners. They seem to have combined realism - the ability to see things as they are - with principle, the devotion to a Truth beyond one's self, and thus avoid the fanaticism and bloodshed of so many subsequent revolutions. What was the source of this remarkable trait? Perhaps the colonial church gave to the nation the teaching that belief requires duty,

and that the performance of that duty requires
humility. [2]

Seal of the
Protestant Episcopal Church
Founded in 1789



JOHN STARK RAVENSCROFT
First Bishop
of
North Carolina

CHAPTER II

St. Stephen's Organized

In the mid 1700's, Oxford was not a town but the plantation of Samuel Benton. He was successful in having the Court House re-located in 1764 to a tract of land which he donated near his home, "OXFORD", with the resultant growth of traffic and development for the area. This budding community was first known as Post Town, then Merrittsville, and finally Oxford. (More on "OXFORD", which became our Community House, appears later in this history.)

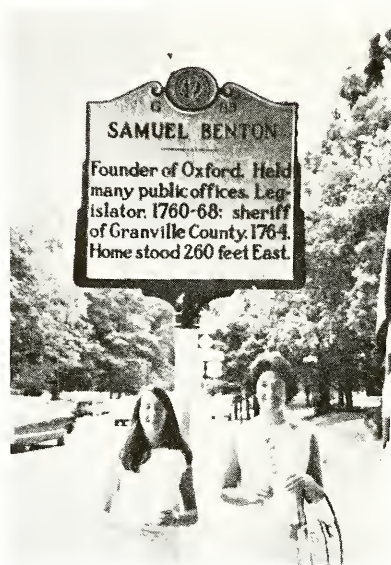
Just when the first service was held in Oxford it is impossible to say. Perhaps in the closing days of the 18th century - perhaps in the early days of the 19th. The Presbyterian Record Book states that in 1813 the Methodist and several other religious bodies held services in the vicinity. There is hardly a doubt that our church was included in those 'other bodies', as Episcopal Church families were certainly in the area at that time.

The town of Oxford was laid out in 1811 and incorporated in 1816. In the Granville Court House records we find this entry: "The commissioners, having advertised as the law directs, did on the 7th and 8th days of May in the year 1812, dispose of lots on credit, until the 20th of April, 1813, except lot No. 21, which they have reserved for the purpose of putting a church or meeting house on, having now on it a number of graves." Signed by Robert Burton, Charles Easton, John Hare, Robert Jeter and Ben Hilliard, Commissioners. This record has direct bearing on the history of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Oxford, because the present church building stands on part of lot No. 21 of the old town plat and reserved in this sale of land.

We read in the Journal of the Convention, 1821, that the diocesan missionary, "Mr. Thomas Wright, held services twice in Oxford during the summer of 1820."



Samuel Benton's House
 "Oxford"
 Burned March 28, 1966



Benton Historical Marker
 Oxford, North Carolina

In the Journal of 1822 we find that the Rev. William Green, pastor of St. John's, Williamsborough reported that "he officiated once a month at Oxford during the past year." The efforts of this man, who went on to become the first Bishop of Mississippi, must have indeed been fruitful for we read in the Journal of the Convention of 1823: "that the certificate of organization of a parish in Oxford was presented to the convention by the Rev. Mr. Green. This parish, St. Stephen's was admitted into union with the Convention and the following delegate took his seat, Mark M. Henderson .. Samuel Gaithwaite was appointed to collect subscriptions for Diocesan Missions." (Our first bishop was also named then.)

From the Journal of 1824 in his episcopal address Bishop Ravenscroft reports: "From Williamsborough, I proceeded on Tuesday the 1st of July, accompanied by the Rev. Mr. Green, to Oxford; where divine service was performed and a sermon preached by candle light, in the Methodist house of worship in that village, to a full congregation." On August 27, 1823, the bishop made a second visit to Oxford. He reports: "directing my route first to Oxford, as the nearest organized congregation; where I arrived in the evening, and was met by the Rev. Mr. Green. Read prayers and preached the next day, to a very respectable audience; only a small number of them, however, Episcopalians; and went in the evening to Dr. Bullock's, where there was an appointment for me to preach the next day."

From the Journal of 1825 in his episcopal address, Bishop Ravenscroft reports: "On my return from Milton I visited the church in Oxford, (1st September) in company with Mr. Green, where after morning service, I preached to a moderate sized congregation. The church here may be considered extinct, the only male member having acted in such a manner as to come under censure." Returning to Oxford on September 15th, he remarked: "though considerable excitement was manifested by some of Methodist persuasion, I consider the prospects in favor of the church very unpromising, though not hopeless." [9]

Just what dark deeds inspired the preceeding comments, history is left to ponder. In any event, the name of St. Stephen's does not appear again in the Journals of the Diocese until 1832.

The Rt. Rev. Levi S. Ives of Connecticut succeeded the late Bishop Revenscroft in 1831. He was popular during his twenty-two years of service. Diocesan conventions were reported to be like family reunions, and the church flourished under his untiring and zealous leadership. When he started his work he found 15 clergymen and 809 communicants; when he concluded he left 40 ministers and more than 2000 members.[5] He resigned in 1853 in favor of Roman Catholicism.

In 1825 a most remarkable family appears on the Oxford scene. Robert and Elizabeth Kyle had sailed on the MARCUS HILL from County Tyrone, Ireland, arriving in New York in 1815. Arriving in Oxford some ten years later, Mr. Kyle established himself as an able and successful merchant. The Kyles had no children of their own, but brought along eight nieces and nephews whom they raised at their home located near the site of the present day Baird Hardware store. They were founding spirits of St. Stephen's and lie buried in the churchyard. Original oil portraits of the Kyles hang in the Parish House parlor, the generous gift of H. Dermont Hedrick.

In the Diocesan Journal of 1832, Bishop Ives reports: "On Monday, the 26th, I proceeded to Oxford, officiated that day and morning of the next in the Court House, to large congregations; in the morning I confirmed three persons. Assisted in the services here by the Rev. Messrs. Saunders and Steel. This congregation is again springing into life, and with a vigor, I think, which promises permanency. The friends of the Church here deserve much credit for their spirited exertions. This Parish, with that of St. John's, Williamsborough, can give a good support to a clergymen, who is much needed. It will form one of the most pleasant and healthy charges in the Diocese." [9]

Thus it was that in the spring of 1832, sufficient faith was inspired among the congregation to consider building a church.

The first vestry was appointed: Dr. James Ridley, Robert Kyle, Rhodes N. Herndon, Lewis Green, T.D. Ridley, William M. Sneed, John C. Taylor, Augustin Landis and James A. Russell.

On April 22, 1832, Robert Kyle, William Ridley, S. O'Brian and Rhodes N. Herndon were selected "to inquire into the propriety of building a church, the probable cost, the prospects of securing subscriptions for that purpose, and to select a suitable site."

Their favorable report led to the appointment of a building committee composed of Messrs. Kyle, Russell and R. Kingsbury. The lot on which the church was to be placed was purchased from William Sneed for \$200. It was the same lot No. 21 of the town plot, set aside by the commissioners, situated on Grassy Creek Road, now College Street.

Our church records show that on July 10, 1832: "On motion of Wm. M. Sneed, Esq. resolved that it is expedient and proper to erect an Episcopal Church in Oxford; and for the furtherance of that object, that a subscription list be handed to every member of the Vestry with a request that he exert himself to procure sums sufficient to erect a suitable and commodious building." A further entry of January 21, 1833 states: "The committee of arrangements comprised of Messrs Kyle, Kingsbury and Herndon reported progress...had contracted with Edward Allen to build a church by the 17th of May; they binding themselves in the name of the Vestry in the sum of \$800."

These actions were reported by the Rev. Robert Shaw, Rector of St. John's and St. Stephen's, in his report to the convention of 1833: "The prospects of the Church in this place continue encouraging, and under the blessing of God, there is every reason to believe, it will soon be permanently established. Here, as everywhere else, the more the distinctive principles and institutions of the Church are



Original St. Stephen's Church

Built 1832; Enlarged and Improved in 1854 and 1884.

(See beginning of stone wall of new church in left hand corner of photograph.)

known, the more does she commend herself to the friends of enlightened piety.

The congregation, though still small, has been gradually increasing, and we expect, when we have a more convenient place to worship in, that it will be considerably enlarged. The Church edifice, the corner stone of which was laid last November, is nearly finished, and is expected to be completed in a few weeks." [9]

Bishop Ives had laid the cornerstone on November 27, 1832. The Rev. Robert Shaw was the first to take charge of the energetic little congregation on December 1st of the same year. The first church building was completed and consecrated on April 20, 1833 with some sixteen families making up the membership.

In his report to the convention of 1833, Bishop Ives said:"I arrived in Oxford on the following day, officiated twice on Sunday the 25th in the Court House to small but deeply attentive congregations, and in the morning confirmed two persons. The Rev. Mr. Morgan, on his way to Salisbury, remained with me and read prayers... On Tuesday the 27th I laid, with appropriate services, the corner stone of an edifice to be erected for the worship of the Episcopal congregation in this place; the members of which have, with praise-worthy zeal, pressed forward through evil and good report, resolved not to be frustrated by man's opposition in the sacred purpose of erecting an altar upon which they may offer unto the Lord agreeably to his own appointment, an acceptable sacrifice."

Then the next year:"I consecrated to the service of Almighty God, a building, by the name of St. Stephen's Church, on which occasion I preached, the Rev. Messrs. Green, Mott, and Taylor, being present and assisting in the services. In the evening of the same day, I preached, after service by the Rev. Mr. Taylor, and confirmed seven persons."

The Rev. Shaw resigned in October of 1833 and was succeeded by the Rev. T. S. W. Mott on June 8, 1834. The first known parochial report was made

by Mr. Mott in 1835. He reports sixteen families, twenty-seven communicants, nineteen baptisms and two marriages. Among those baptised were Gerome Horner, Amanda Jones, Edward H. Hicks and Sarah Hicks.

Mott records: "The state of this parish has been from the time of its commencement uncommonly prosperous. In the course of two or three years, it has risen from nothing to a highly respectable rank among our country congregations. It is now entirely clear of debt, has a neat church completed and paid for, a good bell, and as large a share of male communicants in proportion to its whole number as any other in the state. One of that number has lately removed, and it is with much pain we anticipate the departure of several others to the West in the course of the approaching Autumn. Yet, as prejudice appears in some measure to be dying away, we are not without hope of future increase."

Upon the resignation of the Rev. Mott on July 21, 1836, the new church seems to have suffered a decline. The Rev. William Thurston, minister in charge in 1838, reports that the number of communicants had been reduced to 18 by removals and death. There is reference at this time to other Episcopal churches in Granville County - a St. Mark's and a St. James' in addition to historic St. John's.

On July 31, 1841, the Rev. Lewis Taylor (St. Stephen's has supplied two ministers by this name) became rector. In April of the following year, St. Stephen's was host for the Diocesan Convention in Oxford. Mr. Taylor, of special fame, resigned on March 20, 1844 with his resignation to take effect on May 1st. The vestry passed resolutions of regret and state that they "entertain a grateful sense of the efficient services of Rev. Mr. Taylor, and of his affectionate and paternal deportment in all the relations of life during his connection with this church." This Rev. Lewis Taylor (1784-1870) is buried in the St. Stephen's church yard.

The Rev. Edwin Geer became rector in 1845, to be followed in 1849 by the Rev. J. J. Ridley. It was during his rectorate that the troubles of the diocese in regard to the conversion of Bishop Ives to Rome occurred. We find this entry in the vestry minutes of April 27, 1850: "Resolved that great uneasiness and concern exists in this body and among the congregation of St. Stephen's Church and as it is believed, throughout the Diocese, by reason of the incessant Pastoral letters to the clergy."

On September 17, 1854, the Rev. R. B. Sutton of Baltimore was called to the parish, and the following year steps were taken to enlarge and improve the church. L. A. Paschall, James T. Littlejohn and R. H. Kingsbury were named to the building committee, and about \$500 was spent on the building which was re-dedicated by Bishop Atkinson in July, 1855.

The Rt. Rev. Thomas Atkinson was elected Bishop of North Carolina at the 1853 convention in Raleigh, to succeed Bishop Ives. He served more than 27 years, and at the time of his death in 1881, there were more than 76 ministers and 5,889 communicants.

Dr. Sutton, in addition to his duties as rector of St. Stephen's and St. Paul's, Louisburg, started a mission in Graham, where a church was later built. He was also Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Convention for a number of years in which capacity he rendered valuable service to the Diocese.

He resigned his post at St. Stephen's in the fall of 1858, to be followed in July, 1859 by the Rev. E. W. Gilliam. This latter minister gave one half of his time for mission work in the county and the other half was devoted to the forty communicants reported at St. Stephen's at that time.



CHAPTER III

Division, Reconstruction and Growth

Oxford at this time was enjoying a great growth and promise as a center of learning. It earned, from a writer of the time, the title of "Athens of the South."

Horner Military School was established in 1851 by James H. Horner. It enjoyed the reputation as an outstanding institution and the military training imparted to the young men of the school's early years was all too soon translated into practical use.

It is interesting to note that the able teacher and founder James Horner was himself tutored by the enigmatic John Chavis, respected free black teacher and preacher from Granville County.

Horner School operated in Oxford until its removal to Charlotte in 1914.

Nearby, Oxford College, a school for girls, was opened in 1851 and operated successfully until 1925.

St. John's College got off to an impressive start in 1858, but its history was cut short when it was forced to close in 1861. This same facility was opened by the Masons in 1873 as the Oxford Orphanage. We can well imagine there was a tragic need for such an institution in North Carolina, a state that furnished more men to the Confederate cause than any other state.

"In 1860 North Carolina had a white population of just under 630,000 and a black population of 361,522, of whom 30,463 were free. The census of that year revealed that there were 85,000 farmers in the state, but fewer than 27,000 of them owned any slaves at all. By 1860 the law held that a master no longer owned a slave "body and soul" but only the slaves labor. The slave had the obligation to work, while the master was obliged to feed, clothe, and care for him. These were the terms of a kind of employer-employee relationship...slavery was not only an economic issue, it was also a moral and

social issue..." [excerpts from NORTH CAROLINA, A HISTORY by William S. Powell]

Also from Powell's HISTORY"The legislature set May 13 as election day for delegates to a state convention that would assemble on May 20. Lincoln had placed a blockade along the coast of the state even before the legislature convened, leaving it little choice on the question of secession. When the convention met, it rejected a rather lengthy document that described the reasons and principles that justified secession because of Lincoln's unconstitutional and coercive actions. Instead it passed a simple ordinance repealing the one of 1789 by which the state had joined the Union in the first place. Thereupon, the ordinance proclaimed, the state resumed "full possession and exercise of all those rights of sovereignty which belong and appertain to a free and independent state."

Certainly the mounting tension which led to the Civil War was shared by the congregation of St. Stephen's.

The Reverend E. W. Gilliam became rector on July 23, 1859. He gave half his time to Oxford and half to mission work in the county. There were some 40 communicants in St. Stephen's when he resigned to accept a call to Leaksville in 1860.

Next in line came the Reverend J. B. Calhoun. We have few records of his tenure which ended with his move to Maryland in the spring of 1863.

The Reverend M. H. Vaughan took charge of the parish on August 6, 1863. To this man we are indebted for his considerable efforts in compiling and copying all of the earlier records and history of St. Stephen's in the first forty years of her existence. He did a commendable job of this, but it is regrettable that none of the original documents remain. All of our parish history of this era is taken from Mr. Vaughan's detailed transcription.

From our vestry minutes of October 15, 1863, we find this entry: "At the call of the rector the vestry met. Present were L.A. Paschall, E. H. Hicks, John C. Taylor and Henry A. Taylor. Business -- to

take into consideration certain improvements on the church lot. Familiar conversation but no resolution. Adjourned sine die."

Vestry minutes of June 26, 1864 tell an interesting story...."to consider the propriety of the Rec-tor's leaving on a missionary tour of two months. After deliberation the vestry was unanimous in the opinion that he can be of more use to this congregation than he could be to the army." There is no doubt that there was a real need for his services here because the records show that the number of refugee communicants during the war years nearly equaled the regular communicants of the parish.

The Granville Greys which included many St. Stephen's families was a proud part of a proud South. Family lore is full of accounts of the time. Within the sound of St. Stephen's bell practically every home was occupied by brave women coping as best they could in a society whose able-bodied men were off to the bloody battlefields of the Civil War.

The Benton Home (later know as the Community House) next to the church was used during this period and the plaque on the site tells the story:

In Loving Memory
of
KATHERINE BLOUNT SKINNER LASSITER
1826-1903

And of those who in this home lived under her Christian influence and in the shadow of Old St. Stephen's Church during the days of the Civil War,

THIS HOUSE IS DEDICATED
To the Development of the Christian Spirit
of
Friendliness and Hospitality

In 1849 she came from her home in Perquimans County, N. C. to Oxford, as the wife of Robert William Lassiter. Here she was welcomed into the loving friendship and motherly guidance of Mrs. Robert Kyle and

Mrs. Russell Kingsbury, to whose devotion the beginnings of Saint Stephen's congregation were in a large part due, and whose husbands served on the Committee which built the first Church, consecrated April 20, 1833. Through them began her own active devotion to this Church throughout a long and beautiful life of Christian service in this community. Near its close she had the happiness of seeing the consecration of the present Church edifice on June 11, 1902, the triumphant culmination of many years of self-denial and arduous labor on the part of many saintly men and women, notable among whom, with her, were Mrs. Sarah Hall, Mrs. James H. Horner, Mrs. Melissa Hunter Gil-
liam, and the Building Committee, sons of three of them, Robert W. Lassiter, John G. Hall and Jerome C. Horner.

In September 1862, to afford to members of her family from the war-torn eastern counties a hospitable refuge, for which his former residence had not space, Robert William Lassiter bought this home, whose grounds then adjoined St. Stephen's Churchyard and embraced half the frontage in this block; and to it came with them, their children:

William Lassiter (later Colonel, U. S. Army)
Benjamin Skinner Lassiter (later a Minister of God
in the Episcopal Church in New York, Pennsylvannia, and East and West Carolina, now retired
after a long and faithful ministry)
Robert W. Lassiter, Junior
Richard Thornton Lassiter
James Skinner Lassiter

Into the hospitality of this home were received her recently widowed mother and sister (whose husband, Captain Thomas Jones, C.S.A., had just been killed in battle) and their cousins:

Eliza Fisk Harwood Skinner, widow of Major Tristram L. Skinner, C.S.A., of Edenton and her children
Marian Fisk Skinner
Frederick Nash Skinner (later a Minister of God in

the Episcopal Church in East and South Carolina, to his life's end, August 1927.)

Tristram Lewther Skinner

Maria Louisa W. Skinner (later wife of the Revd. Dr.

Robt. B. Drane, now and since 1876 beloved

Rector of St. Paul's, Edenton)

Penelope Eden Skinner

And their Governess, Miss Lizzie Custis.

"Her Children Arise and Call Her Blessed"

CHRISTMAS 1927

With the surrender of Lee at Appomattox and Johnson at the Bennett Place near Durham, the cruel days of that era known as the Reconstruction began. When a victorious Sherman's army camped on the St. John's College campus (now the Oxford Orphanage), all the women on College Street would gather each night in a single home for protection. What treasures they had in the household were nervously buried out of sight; a few pieces of jewelry were reported to have survived in the sanctuary of their hair knots.

The Old Testament vision of an angry, avenging God did not require a great deal of imagination for a congregation in the post Civil War south. Their world was turned upside down, loved ones and a way of life were "gone with the wind." The state was under military rule, with disfranchisement of the governing class. It was a time of worthless "Jeff Davis shucks" and a faith on trial. Federal troops were withdrawn in 1870 and a long, slow process of healing and adjustment began.

The National Episcopal Church which had been divided into two separate organizations, was re-united after the war.

According to William S. Powell in his NORTH CAROLINA: A HISTORY - "Many of the changes brought in the state were long overdue, but the suddenness of their implementation disturbed many people. The nearly paranoid fear of many whites that there would be black uprisings was a controlling factor. This fear was not understood in the North nor was there

any general realization of how unprepared most ex-slaves were to manage their own affairs as freed men, much less to participate in government. Federal laws designed to regulate the treatment of blacks applied equally to all regions of the United States, of course, and in many places outside the South people came to a new understanding and appreciation of how blacks were treated."

From the address of Honorable A. W. Graham given in 1909 when the corner stone of the Confederate monument was laid in Oxford, we have a feeling of the sentiment of these Reconstruction times:

Said Mr. Graham, "Since the creation of Granville County in 1746, she has occupied a place of prominence among her sisters. Whether in peace or in war, among her sons have been found leaders of the times in which they lived.

So in the war of 1812, in the Mexican War, and in the war for Texas Independence, the men of Granville did their full duty. But it was in the War Between the States, from 1861 to 1865, that the sons of Granville gave the greatest evidence of the heroic mould in which they were cast. In devotion to principle, dash and gallantry in action, patient endurance and sacrifice, the men of Granville were excelled by none. With not more than 1,800 voters she contributed more than 2,100 soldiers to the gigantic conflict. And there was hardly a conflict in Carolina, Virginia, Maryland or Pennsylvania where the ground was not enriched by the blood of the soldier from Granville.

I wish I had the time to give you something of the history of these gallant sons, and recount the deeds of valor they performed - how they fought and fell. Would that I could fittingly describe that splendid soldier of the cross, as well as of war, Samuel L. Howard, of Co. K, 55th North Carolina troops, who would march or fight all day and before he would lie down at night would visit the hospitals or the battle field to find those who were wounded or dying and to nurse and pray with them and preserve their last loving messages for kindred and friends. So tender and considerate was he, that it is stated,

when on the sharpshooters' line, just as he drew a bead on a Yankee and pulled the trigger, he would send up the prayer "may God have mercy on your soul." But it did not interfere with the accuracy of his aim."

The speech of the 'silvery-voiced' Governor Kitchin at the same ceremony is reported to have "touched the ocean depth of the people,, that held for an hour and a quarter every listener spell-bound."

He reported, "When the Southern soldier left the theater of war he entered one to play, if possible, a more important part. He had lost in the conflict and returned to his home which the ruthless hand of war had touched and left desolate. He was determined to rebuild the shattered fortunes of the South, to reclaim the wasted fields, to reopen the schools, to fill the churches. He encountered a tide of crime and destruction in North Carolina such as history had never before known. Many leaders were deprived of their citizenship by the Federal Government, but they found they could not deprive them of their leadership. The Federal Government controlled by insatiable malice and



First Rectory of St. Stephen's
Built 1867

bigotry, and by duress, by fraud and corruption; the Constitution was amended to accomplish the impossible racial equality. The day of the scalawag and the carpet-bagger came, spreading crime and vandalism abroad in the land, making fear to sit before every door. The invisible empire sprung up, the Ku Klux came as a method necessary under the existing circumstances. The Supreme Court was applied to for a writ of habeas corpus and was served to the Governor who treated this guaranty of the personal rights of citizens as a thing out of date."

The Governor's tribute to Southern women, couched in a thousand golden words, melted the heart of everyone. In conclusion, Governor Kitchin called upon all to "love the Union now as the Confederates loved the Confederacy in '61-'65, to serve the Union now as they served the Confederacy then, having nothing to apologize for, nothing to retract, but receiving inspiration for a heritage of inexhaustible glory from the finest soldiers ever seen on the planet."

But St. Stephen's seems to have weathered the Reconstruction Era without permanent ill effects. In fact, it was likely an era of strengthened faith for we find that in 1873 the church at Goshen was built while under the guidance of the Rev. P.D. Thompson, Rector of St. Stephen's. Also under his charge, a house and lot at Sassafras Fork (now Stovall) was bought and regular services begun.

In our vestry minutes as early as 1835 we find this entry: "The Vestry met this day. Present were Rev. T.L.W. Mott, Dr. James Ridley, Messrs. Kyle, Kingsbury, Herndon, T. C. Hicks and Jasper Hicks. Resolved that the negroes be admitted into the church upon trial." Also this quaint entry in 1855: "Married, William Hagin to Martha Curtis - coloured and free, under a tree."

An entry in the 1881 parochial report..."Mr. J. C. Horner has rendered efficient service as lay-reader, superintendent of both the white and colored Sunday Schools, and as parish collector."

Toward the end of the century, there was sufficient interest for the formation of St. Cyprian's

Episcopal Church in Oxford for members of the black community. This mission has continued as a valuable member of the area's churches to the present, with a modern church building and parish house on Granville Street.

It was in 1866 that the Rev. Vaughn reported: "In the providence of God, everything in my parish is most flourishing: large congregation, full Sunday School, and a willingness to give of worldly goods for the benefit of the church." Part of these "worldly goods" were used to purchase our first rectory which was paid for and title made to the vestry in 1867.

Mr. Vaughn, as you will see, was rector of the parish twice, six years and a few months each time. During his tenure here he won the heart and hand of a Miss Hamme, member of a Granville County family that remains active in the church to this day.

Vestry minutes of the post Civil War period have repeated references to the problem of providing the rector's salary. In 1870 the Reverend Vaughn resigned to go to Elizabeth City, even as the vestry "assured him that his services as Rector had been entirely satisfactory and earnestly hoped that he would feel justified to continue in charge."

On November 28, 1875 the Rev. M. H. Vaughn returned to Oxford and also served the congregations at Goshen and Stovall.

On March 9, 1879, the Rector and Vestry signed testimonials recommending Rev. Benjamin S. Lassiter as a suitable person to be ordained to the priesthood. Also recommended was Junius Moore Horner as a candidate for Holy Orders. He later became the Bishop of Western North Carolina.

In 1879 there is a record of a vote of thanks to F. A. Fetter thanking him for his faithfulness as a lay-reader for this church. He taught in Oxford for a number of years and later became a minister. He is buried in the church yard.

Another window to our heritage is found in a copy of the May 9, 1876 issue of The Morning Clairion,

a daily newspaper printed in Oxford by Jas. A. Robinson and Jas. C. Williams, editors and publishers. Under the Church Directory heading is an interesting listing of services for the local churches, a reproduction of which is adjacent.

This "neat, newsy little morning paper - giving all the latest town and county news, with important foreign items" boasted that it was "Democratic to the Backbone." A single copy of The Morning Clairion cost 2 cents.

From its pages we also learn that there were "refreshing showers yesterday...Charlie Landis has the pneumonia...the friends of the noble horseradish will be pleased to know that he is now in season...and that Mrs. Kyle, who has been quite sick for several days, is convalescent."

One wonders what became of the "good bell" of earlier fame, for we find that in 1881 a new bell was purchased for the church in the amount of \$197.94. This 1881 bell is the one still in use at St. Stephen's. The generosity and/or prosperity of the congregation is evidenced again in 1884 when the church organ was

THE MORNING CLARION.

Democratic at all times.

TUESDAY - - - MAY 9, 1876.

GENERAL DIRECTORY.

CHURCHES.

EPISCOPAL—Rev. M. H. Vaughn Rector—Services every Sunday at 11½ o'clock a. m. and 5½ p. m. Friday evenings 5½ o'clock p. m.

METHODIST—Rev. S. V. Hoyle Pastor, Services second Sunday in each month at 11 a. m., and 7½ p. m. 4th Sunday night 7½ p. m. Prayer meeting every Tuesday evening same hour.

BAPTIST—Rev. F. R. Underwood, Pastor—Services every 1st and 3d Sunday at 11 a. m. and 7½ p. m. Prayer meeting every Thursday evening at 7½ o'clock p. m.

PRESBYTERIAN—Rev. D. E. Jordan, Pastor. Preaching every 2d and 4th Sabbath at 11 o'clock a. m. and 8 o'clock. Prayer meeting Wednesday 8 o'clock.

MAILS.

Henderson—Leaves daily at 8½ a. m. Arrives 5 p. m.

Knap of Reeds—Leaves Tuesdays and Fridays 6 a. m. Arrives same day at 6 p. m.

Berea—Leaves Berea Saturdays at 9 a. m. Arrives 12 m.

Oak Hill—Leaves Wednesdays and Saturdays at 6 a. m. Arrives Tuesdays and Fridays 6 p. m.

REGULATIONS OF THE POSTOFFICE.

Money orders issued between 9 a. m. 4 p. m.

Mails closes at 8 a. m. and opens at 5 p. m.

L. C. TAYLOR, P. M.

OXFORD.

Mayor—James B. Crews.

Constable—W. C. Crabtree.

Commissioners—S. S. Haithcock, A. H. A. Williams, T. D. Crawford, Smith Watkins.

(Courtesy of
Mrs. Tom Johnson)

bought, and gallery, recess chancel and room for the organ were added to the church building.

Each year the full proceedings of the Diocesan Convention are recorded in the Convention Journal, a copy of which is filed in the North Carolina Collection at the Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. For accounts of our parish and the church in the state at that time, let us examine the record of the 66th Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of North Carolina as it met on May 14, 15 and 16, 1884 at St. Stephen's Church, Oxford. Presiding was the Rt. Rev. Theodore B. Lyman.

This was the first convention after General Convention had given consent to the formation of a new Diocese in North Carolina, the Diocese of Eastern Carolina.

Items on the agenda included a petition from St. Philip's Mission, Durham to be admitted into union...the Rev. Jas. B. Cheshire was elected historiographer of the Diocese of N. C....former historical sketches of parishes in Eastern Carolina were to be turned over to that Diocese...80 parishes and missions reported "number of souls" 5,206 and clergy, 54.... Junius M. Horner was one of the seven candidates for Deacon's Orders.

The Rev. Wm. S. Pettigrew reported in the parochial reports of that year...St. John's, Williamsboro had a whole "number of souls" of 90 and the estimated value of the church of 300 "sittings" was \$2,000...The Church of the Good Shepherd in Ridgeway reported 80 "souls"...and the chapel at Middleburg was sufficiently advanced to admit services being conducted in it as of June 17, 1883. (The benches in St. Stephen's chapel are the ones used in this church and were brought here after the chapel was torn down.)

Notes from Bishop Lyman's address:

"The proposal to go to Oxford was very warmly

seconded by all the citizens of that place, and every disposition has been manifested to do all that was possible for the promotion of our convenience and comfort.

While there has been, in no quarter, anything remarkable in the way of progress, yet there has been on almost every side, a steady and encouraging growth.

To you my brethren of the clergy...an earnest plea for the children and youth of our parishes... the continued instruction (after confirmation) and watchful care of the Pastor is especially needed, just at the time when the young are exposed to the greatest temptations, and when words of affectionate counsel might rescue them from the snares of the wicked one."

Also, resolved: "That the members of this Convention, having visited with much pleasure the Oxford Orphan Asylum, do hereby express their hearty sympathy with that noble object of charity, and do recommend it as worthy of the cordial support of all Christian people."

"That the thanks of this Convention are hereby heartily tendered to the Rector and Vestry of St. Stephen's Church, and to the citizens of Oxford generally for the unstinted and most cordial hospitality and kindness with which they have entertained the members of this body during its present session."

"That our thanks are tendered to those railroads who have granted facilities to the members of this Convention in visiting Oxford, and especially to the officers of the Oxford and Henderson Railroad for running their trains to suit the convenience of those attending the Convention."

St. Stephen's had a series of rectors of brief tenure from 1882 to 1897. In 1882 (after the resignation of the Reverend Vaughn) the Reverend F.L. Bush became Rector, resigning sometime during 1884. He was followed by the Reverend Jas. Baird, D.D. from New York who remained in charge a few months only.

The Reverend J. Y. Gholson, D.D., from Baltimore was called and remained about a year. On Christmas Day, 1885, the Reverend L.W. Rose became Rector

and he reports "the parish has suffered severely from frequent changes of rectors, but now gives evidence of being in a prosperous condition." However, he resigned in 1887 and was followed by the Reverend W.W. Walker and Bishop Lyman reports, "the prospects for the growth of the Church have never been brighter." And indeed they were bright, for he reports 143 communicants, the largest number the Church had ever had. But the next year he reports 27 removals and 3 deaths, and the next report shows only 96 communicants, a loss of 47 in two years.

The question of building a new church was proposed at this time and a collection of cash and pledges was made on Easter Day for that purpose. A committee of two was appointed to negotiate the purchase of the corner lot next to the church, which lot was available for \$2,150. After reconsidering the matter the vestry decided to rebuild on the same lot.

The Reverend Walker resigned in November of 1892 while matters in regard to the new church were still in an unsettled state.



Communion Service
Inscription Reads:
*"Offering from Junior Auxiliary
Easter, 1891."*

CHAPTER IV

New Century — New Church

We now find St. Stephen's in the Victorian Age which waltzed gaudily onto the American scene after the Civil War. It was a robust age, striving for gentility - a day of concerts in the park, bustles and high button shoes. There was a great deal of excitement about the gold rush in California and fortunes to be made in the West.

The church, too, was to be lifted and carried forward in the surge of trade and prosperity. During the rectorate of the Reverend Edward Benedict (1893-1895) plans were chosen for the new church to be built on the corner lot adjacent to the old church.

These plans were furnished by Silas McBee, editor of the New York Churchman. A building committee of three was appointed: Mr. J. C. Horner, Mr. J. G. Hall and Mr. R. W. Lassiter.

From the first it was agreed that the congregation did not want to go into debt for construction of the church, but would raise a sum of money and build as far as it would go, then stop until they could raise more funds. So it was that when the last nail was driven, the money was in hand to pay for it; an idea that seems unbelievable to us today.

The plans were well underway when Mr. Benedict was succeeded by the Reverend James Plummer on July 1, 1895. He reported at the time there had been over 600 baptisms, over 350 confirmations, 200 burials and about 150 marriages at St. Stephen's. He also reported 75 communicants in 1897.

During Plummer's rectorship, the foundation for the new church was laid and the walls were erected as far as the top of the windows. The unusual rose-brown stone for the structure had been selected from a quarry near Sanford, N. C. As the quarry was in bankruptcy, the receivers agreed that the church could have the stone if they would pay for its re-

moval from the quarry and the freight charges, which was done.

The Reverend Robert Bruce Owens became the rector on Christmas Day, 1897. It was during the almost six years of his incumbency that the church was completed. Looking back over our history and records, it seems appropriate to give a bit of extra information on this most admirable man.

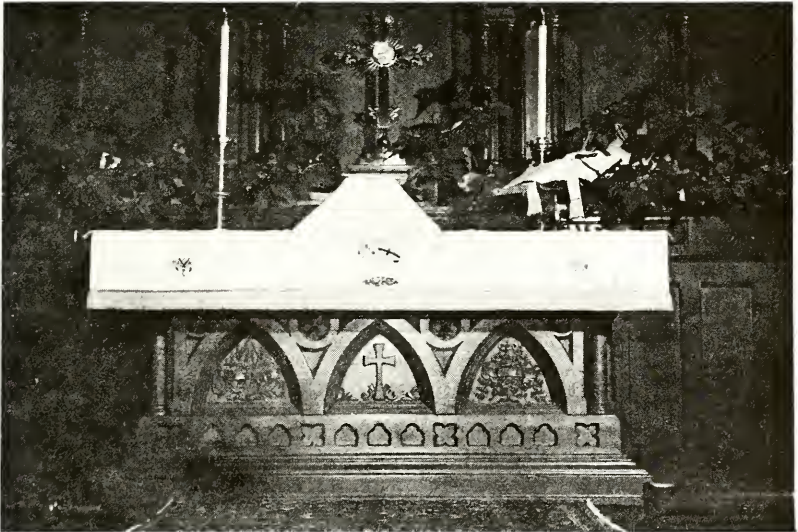
From a history writer's point of view, the Reverend Owens left a large imprint on St. Stephen's. His historical sketch which was read to the congregation on June 7, 1902 is the basis for much of the early part of this book and portions of it are quoted elsewhere. It reflects a patient, complete and accurate search of source material up to that time. This native of Rowan County was a young man when he arrived in Oxford, having been made a deacon in 1892 and ordained to the priesthood in 1896. His first charge before coming to Oxford was St. Paul's, Salisbury. Leaving Oxford, he went to the Church of the Good Shepherd, Rocky Mount and while there he designed the Spring Hope Mission. Next came St. John's, Battleboro, before going to the Church of the Holy Comforter, Charlotte, where he served for 29 years. He died there in 1953 at the age of 82, having been in the ministry for 53 years.

This modest minister possessed exceptional talent as a wood carver. In a letter to our Senior Warden, Mr. R. H. Lewis, in 1945, to answer his query, Owens says: "There were 75 communicants when I took charge, and 136 when I resigned. In 1897 there were only seven men old enough to serve on the vestry... I found the present church built up as high as the eaves...I made the altar myself. I also made the credence, the design for which was copied from a picture of the tomb of one of the Archbishops of Canterbury. Shortly before I left, at the request of Mrs. Gilliam, I also made and installed the Rood Screen as a memorial to her distinguished husband, Judge Gilliam. The screen was made from a design furnished by the architect of the church, Mr. McBee of New York!"



The Little Workers Society, March 19, 1898

Taken in the home of Mrs. H.G. Cooper, the picture shows the Rev. Owens (1), Eva Horner (4), Sophronia Cooper (5), Miss Mary E. Horner, leader, Mark Landis, Hamlin Landis, Nelson Ferebee, Jeanette Biggs, Mildred Taylor, Sophie Taylor, Mary Outlaw, Laura Williams, and others.



Altar at St. Stephen's

Made by Rector, R.B. Owens

To give you a feeling of this era, to see what kind of world we had when the Messrs. Horner, Hall and Lassiter were completing their work on the building of the new church....

The year was 1901 and on the world scene the British and Dutch were going at each other in what we call the Boer War..

In China the Boxer Rebellion had erupted to drive the foreign devils out of the country and our legations were under seige in Peiking...

Only two months before our first service, President McKinley was shot, and his Vice-President, Theodore Roosevelt became our 26th President...

The Wright brothers were working on some crazy gliders in their bicycle shop...

The automobile was a loud and rather bothersome novelty. There were only 150 miles of paved highway in the whole USA...

The population of the USA was only 1/3 of what it is today...

Tax revenues were less than 1%...

Eggs were 12 cents a dozen...

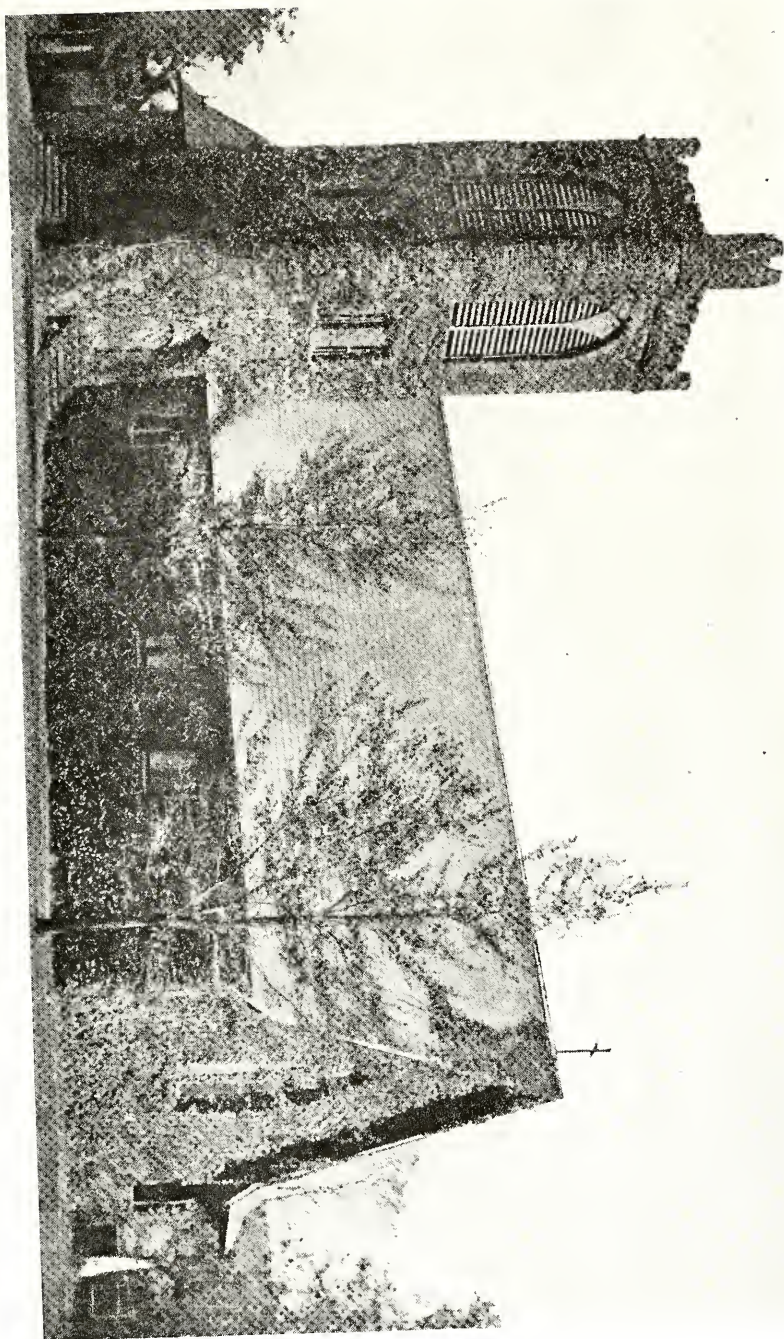
Preachers were supposed to live mainly on faith and earnings of \$500 to \$800 a year...

Charles B. Adcock had campaigned for governor in 1900 on the issue of public schools. This same fall Oxford had opened its first tax supported "graded school" and teachers were paid \$25.00 a month...

The Methodists were nearing completion on their new church across the corner, replacing their older building on Main Street (this building was moved and is now the present Knott's Grove Church).

On November 17, 1901, a brisk fall Sunday morning, the congregation of St. Stephen's marched from the old church to the new singing "Ten Thousand Times Ten Thousand."

Special timbers from the tall pines near Louisville had been selected and custom cut for the roof framing. Much of the work had been done by members themselves, in fact, practically every member had a personal part in seeing the building completed. It had taken six years and had cost some \$12,000.00.



It was a proud day.

The Horner family created a lasting memorial to James H. Horner, founder of Horner Military School, with their gift of the tower. The plaque reads:

"This tower is erected to the
Glory of God and in memory of
James Hunter Horner, M.A.,
L. L. D.

April 3, 1822-June 13, 1892
Graduate of the University of
North Carolina 1844

Founder Horner Military School 1851
Captain Co.E. 23rd Regiment N.C.T.C.S.A.
For many years warden of St. Stephen's Church
A scholar, an educator, a Christian "

Numerous other memorials were first used that day, and many brass plates about the church mark these generous gifts.

Bishop Cheshire must have been impressed by the enthusiasm that day as he confirmed a class of 23 - this group included Julia Primrose Winston, Charles Archibald Taylor, William Thornton Lassiter, Lewis Nathaniel Taylor and Willie Mott Pinnix.

The first use of the new stone church had been for the wedding of Miss Carolyn Skinner and Mr. Cameron Easton on September 25, 1901.

On St. Barnabus Day, June 11, 1902, St. Stephen's was officially dedicated by the Rt. Rev. Joseph Blount Cheshire, Bishop of North Carolina. This was during the meeting of the 1902 Diocesan Convention which was held in Oxford.

The old building was declared abandoned and removed from the lot, which was adjacent to the east. Parts of this structure are reported to have been used for a building on the dairy farm of Judge A.W. Graham on Military Street.

Mr. Owens resigned his eventful rectorship on November 8, 1903 and was succeeded by the Rev. George M. Tolson on February 1, 1904. During the three month vacancy services were rendered by the

Reverend F.W. Hilliard, a retired priest who was living in Oxford with his daughters who conducted the "Hilliard School." When Mr. Tolson resigned the following year to become Archdeacon of the Convocation of Raleigh, there was a fifteen month vacancy and Mr. Hilliard again rendered efficient service.

In January 1907, on Quinquagesima Sunday, the Reverend H.F.T. Horsfield began his faithful service to St. Stephen's. His tenure was the longest of any rector thus far at St. Stephen's, lasting until 1926. There are many physical reminders of Dr. Horsfield about today, notably the oil portrait in the Horsfield Parlor of the Parish House. Also there are two book cases given to the church by his son, Basil, in recent years, the revolving book stand in the rector's study and the oak desk in the secretary's office.

The furnishing and beautifying of the new church continued during Dr. Horsfield's tenure. In 1913 the reredos, a gift of the Sanctuary Guild, was placed behind the altar. The new Austin organ, a memorial to Mrs. Letty Kittrell Lassiter, for some thirty years the organizer and leader of the choir and a "Mother in Isreal" (as the rector said), was first used on Sunday, March 4, 1917. This replaced the earlier hand pumped model, a duty assigned to the robust boy-power from the congregation.

It was also during this period that plans were made to picture the life of Christ in stained glass windows around the nave of the church. This project was to take many years for completion. The beautiful memorial tributes were designed and made by R. Geissler, Inc. of New York City. Because of the many donors and names involved, a special section on the windows is to be found in the appendix section of this book. Or better yet, the reader is invited to take a quiet walk around the interior of the church and absorb the moving rendition of this ancient art form, noting the full inscriptions on each window.

To quote from the dedication bulletin of one of the windows (The Nativity window in memory of Mrs. H.G.Cooper (1866-1944): "The many colors of the window were carefully chosen and distributed. Their gradual and subtle changes during the course of a single day give the impression that the window is somehow alive. The window is endowed with a facination and a liveliness which will endear it to many worshipers for generations to come."

When the Kaiser began his march across Europe many of the young members left the congregation of St. Stephen's to lend their efforts in "the war to end all wars" - what with sad hindsight today we call World War I. The prayers for peace had particular significance for those left behind during those difficult years. An example would be the family of J. Archibald and Maria Kerr Taylor. At one time at least three of their sons were in the trenches of France. Our processional cross is a memorial to E. Winfield Taylor (1893-1918) who was killed in France.



Processional Cross

What acolyte does not remember his or her first time as crucifer at St. Stephen's?

A memorial to World War I casualty, E. Winfield Taylor.

When the armistice was signed on the eleventh minute of the eleventh hour of the eleventh of November 1918 the boys returned home and a victorious America settled down to the business of peace and prosperity.

Meanwhile, there were decisions to be made at the church. An entry from the vestry minutes of March 6, 1917 shows "permission given to the Ladies Aid Society to install umbrella stands in the rear of the Church." Soon the rector's salary was to be raised to \$1,200 per year. Recalling the flu epidemic, we find that on February 15, 1920, "A committee consisting of Mr. B. K. Lassiter and Mr. R. H. Lewis, Sr. was appointed to confer with the health authorities and request permission to reopen the church on Ash Wednesday, the influenza situation apparently being much improved."

Four Diocesan Conventions have been held in our parish: 1842, 1884, 1902 and the last in 1923. This convention marked the one hundredth anniversary of the union of the parish with the Convention of the



Rectory of St. Stephen's Church
Built 1923 — College Street

Diocese. Bishop Cheshire had the following remarks to make in his address to the Convention: "Brethren of the Clergy and Laity - We meet for our 107th annual Diocesan Convention in what, in our new American life, we call one of our old parishes. In a Chronological List of our parishes which I made some years ago, St. Stephen's, Oxford, stood eighth in the roll of the parishes of this Diocese (she is now 6th among existing parishes)...It sent a delegate to the Convention which met in St. Luke's Church, Salisbury in 1823, and was admitted into union with the Diocese at that time...There must be much that is good in the past of St. Stephen's because so much good is evident in its present. This beautiful stone church, one of the most attractive among the churches of the Diocese, is the expression of an inward beauty and devotion, more pleasing than any structure of timber and stone...When this church was built this was a small and by no means a rich congregation. And while they were forward in responding to their diocesan and general duties, they found the means out of their comparatively scanty store, to erect this beautiful building. To me it speaks eloquently of saintly lives and strong hearts, who have passed on before us, as well as of many good and true Christian men and women still with us."

It was also in 1923 that the new rectory on College Street was first occupied on September 13. The earlier rectory was moved to face Rectory Street and sold for a private residence.

This was an eventful time for the Horsfield's as the vestry minutes of September 5, 1923 record that: "The rector announced that his son, Geoffrey Horsfield, had determined to become a candidate for Holy Orders and go into the ministry of our Church."

Geoffrey Horsfield, one of four children, later assisted his father here before going to Atlanta, Georgia. It was while there that he decided to go to Rome and to enter the Roman Catholic Church. After a few years he became again a member of the Episcopal Church and was a professor at the Episcopal Church School, Virginia.



The Altar, showing oak reredos added in 1913.

The Rev. Scoville of Concord, N.C., in charge of the Young Peoples Work in the diocese, was invited to come in December 1923 and organize a group at St. Stephen's. This first youth organization was founded under the leadership of Mrs. J. C. Horner, Mrs. H. G. Cooper and Miss Jeanette Biggs. First known as the Junior Auxiliary, this group later became the Young Peoples Service League - an organization of the age group which we now call the Episcopal Young Churchmen.

Two interesting entries occur in our vestry minutes of 1926. On January 20, "Upon motion of J.G. Hall, seconded by R. K. Taylor, the rector was asked to write the Bishop for information as to steps necessary to be taken so as to enable women members of the congregation to vote in all parochial elections" and then on July 11, "the secretary announced at the meeting of the congregation on May 26, 1926, the women members of the congregation were unanimously

given the right to vote in the future in all parochial elections and meetings." The fairer members of the congregation although having rendered faithful services through the years with the Altar Guild and teaching, now organized the Women's Auxiliary.

That same year the Reverend Horsfield wrote that "deafness and the infirmities contingent on age cause my resignation after many years of content with an appreciative people, full of good works."

Members of the nine man vestry, many of whom often served by re-election numerous terms were: J.C. Horner, B.K. Lassiter, A.W. Graham, Jr., R.H. Lewis, Jr., M.K. Pinnex, J.G. Hall, R.G. Lassiter, R.W. Lassiter and C.H. Easton. It was about this time that the minutes of vestry activities become much more numerous with the advent of monthly vestry meetings, in lieu of those "at the call of the Rector."

There had been considerable interest in building a parish house through the years, dating back to 1912. Plans were drawn and other preparations went forward toward erecting such a new structure. Then in 1927 Mr. and Mrs. R.G. Lassiter deeded in trust to St. Stephen's Church the historic Benton homeplace to be known henceforth as the Community House. This generous gift was used for Sunday School and other church functions for years until the erection of the present Parish House.

Mr. Horsfield was followed in 1927 by the Reverend Reuben Meredith. Mr. Meredith was the father of seven daughters and one son. Three of these daughters caught the fancy of the men of the community, Mary married Mr. John Niles, Margaret became the wife of A.D. Capehart and Jacqueline became Mrs. Davis Calvert. Mr. Meredith served as Rector through the troubled years of our nation until 1934.

In 1928 the Every Member Canvas showed \$4,868 subscribed toward a budget of \$5,100. In the minutes of December 17, 1931 "the treasurer reported a successful year financially with all bills paid and a small balance in the bank, although the outlook for 1932 in a financial way is rather gloomy."

CHAPTER V

More Recent Heritage

Thus far we have traced the development of Oxford through war and peace, boom and depression, from her infancy to a southern town of the 1930's.

Somewhere during this period, our community lost the elusive touchstone for sustained growth and expansion which belied its earlier promise as a leading town in the state. Two once thriving institutions of higher learning were now gone. A successful buggy factory failed to make the transition into the age of the automobile. As the county seat of Granville County, Oxford was similar to many other small piedmont towns, catering to a farm oriented economy. Our community was successively carried forward through the exuberant post-war 20's, stunned during the 30's, then hurtled again into the world arena with the ominous portent of the 40's.

Yet through it all, Oxford and the members of our little church were buffered from the violent currents of change. Perhaps the main stream of growth and change and prosperity bypassed the quiet little community but their faith and stability ran deep and calm. In AUNTIE MAME we read of worship of a "very genteel but stone deaf Episcopal God", but accomplishments do not support that such was the case at St. Stephen's.

Mission work has always been an important factor in the life of St. Stephen's. You recall that in 1859 the Reverend Gilliam gave half of his time to Oxford and half to mission work in the county. Mr. Vaughn shared his ministry with the congregation here and that of Goshen and Stovall (Sassafras Fork at that time). In March 1879, Junius Moore Horner was recommended as a suitable person to be admitted as a candidate for Holy Orders from Oxford later becoming Bishop of Western North Carolina. St. Stephen's for years gave active support and leadership

to the mountain school in that diocese at Valle Crucis. Miss Mary Horner was St. Stephens' missionary to Valle Crucis.

Our gift to overseas mission work was Miss Ellen T. Hicks (1866-1951). Born in Oxford, she was the second woman in North Carolina to enter the field of nursing as a profession. Following graduation from the training school at Philadelphia General Hospital at the age of 23, she became a missionary nurse to the Phillipines for 13 years. There she established a St. Luke's Hospital and a school of nursing for Filipino girls. She left the hospital in 1917 intending to nurse the wounded of World War I in France. As the war was almost over the Board of Missions asked her instead to take charge of the hospital in Ponce, Puerto Rico. She arrived there in May, 1918 where she served for the next twenty years until her retirement in 1938. She led the way in erecting a new hospital there and each year graduated a class of nurses. The nurses dormitory at St. Luke's in Ponce is dedicated to Ellen Hicks. "Aunt Hickey", as she was affectionately known to thousands of both young and old, had a worldwide circle of friends - nurses she had trained, missionaries, doctors, clergy, former patients and people of all walks of life. Her mornings mail to her retirement home in Florida came from all corners of the globe, keeping her in touch with her friends to the last.

Another missionary with St. Stephen's roots is Pattie Ward Pratt, a niece of Miss Ellen Hicks. She married Mr. Charles Pratt, a Presbyterian minister, and as a missionary couple they went to Korea in 1910 sharing their Christian faith in that nation. In 1975, Mrs. Pratt, a spry 91, returned to her home parish accompanied by her children and grandchildren.

The Reverend Lewis N. Taylor, D.D. (1889-1947) entered the ministry from his home parish, St. Stephen's. We are more familiar with his brothers Edward, Rives and Arch Taylor, all faithful members of our congregation. He served a valued rectorship to these parishes of the Episcopal Church: Trinity

Church at Townsville; St. Peter's, Stovall; The Church of the Heavenly Rest, Middleburg; St. John's, Williamsboro; St. Luke's, Palm Springs; Zion Church, Eastover and for the last twenty-two years of his life as rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Columbia, South Carolina. As the Rt. Rev. John J. Gravatt, Bishop of the Diocese of Upper South Carolina said of the President of his Standing Committee, "Dr. Taylor had a great Christian faith and gloriously expressed it in his life and service."

The leadership of the parish was passed on to the Rev. Albert E. Sanderson in 1935 by the Reverend Meredith. Before coming to Oxford, Mr. Sanderson had been assistant rector at Christ Church, Burlington. His two later charges were Emmanuel Church in Bristol, Virginia and Christ Church in La Plata, Maryland. He served for three years to be succeeded by the young Reverend C. Alfred Cole in 1938.

Mr. Cole also served for three years, ministering to the congregations at Stovall and Townsville in addition to his duties at St. Stephen's and to that of a growing family. At the age of 44 he became the Rt. Rev. Cole, third Bishop of Upper South Carolina.

From his post in Rocky Mount, Virginia on January 1, 1942 the Reverend Henry Johnston, Jr. accepted the call to duty at St. Stephen's. The attack on Pearl Harbor the previous December 7 made him our war minister. Many people recall the sincerity and honesty that were to become the trademark of this Tarboro native, when in his first service, he said, "I can't be another Alfred Cole but I promise you that I will be the best Henry Johnston I know how."

Under his leadership the Parish Council assumed extensive leadership for the church, the annual parish supper was started along with the annual election of a rotating vestry as dictated by the revised Diocesan Canons. There were some 180 active communicants in the parish at this time and a minister could hope to be paid about \$2,000 a year.

Army khaiki was scattered generously among the Sunday worshipers during the years of World War II. Many soldiers from the newly erected Camp Butner



Ordination of the Rev. Clarence Hobgood at St. Stephen's. In 1971 he was made Bishop for the Armed Forces. Shown left to right are: the Rev. Henry Johnston, Jr.; The Rt. Rev. Edwin A. Penick; and Deacon Hobgood.

nearby attended services and were welcomed into the homes of the congregation during the war years. In a way they helped fill the vacancies left by absent members in the armed forces scattered around the globe. A Service Roll from the bulletin of Armistice Day, November 11, 1945 lists the following members:

Dudley A. Bonitz, Jr.	Edward Fort Taylor
Henry G. Cooper, II	Nelson Ferebee Taylor
Henry G. Cooper, III	Rives Williams Taylor
Nathaniel Chesley Daniel	Daniel Murray Paul
Leonidas Taylor Hines	James Brewer Powell, Jr.
Floyd Williard Leonard	John Adams Niles
Richard Henry Lewis, Jr.	Leonard Bullock Fleming
Lewis Jackson Peoples	Hugh Skinner Easton
Archibald L. Taylor, Jr.	Virginia B. Adams
Richard Pelham Taylor	Edward G. Peoples, Jr.
Thomas N. Taylor	Thomas Moore Evins
Branch Bernard Burton, Jr.	Charles Gregory Powell
Henry Leslie Perry Hall	James Franklyn Maultsby
Augustus W. Graham, III	Alfred Slade Ballou
Chandler Reid Watkins, Jr.	James Alexander Taylor
Edward Sholar Powell	Mary Anna Taylor
William Hill Powell, Jr.	Edwin Clingman Powell
Sam Evins Cooper	Leonidas C. Taylor, Jr.

This was an era of rationing and radios - radios tuned in for news of the fighting. Unfamiliar names like Iwo Jima, Guadacanal, Hiroshima, Normandy and Boulogne and Salerno became household words. Those on the home front were busy with the Red Cross and overtime and weekly entertaining at the Woman's Club. The preacher's wife had her hands full with regular social work and a young daughter, Betsy.

Mr. Johnston was not only loved by his own flock, but those of other denominations held him in high esteem. He was popular with the entire community. This feeling was reciprocated as he said in a later dedication of his scrapbook to the parish library: "From a former rector who is most grateful for having had the privilege of serving for awhile among the people of St. Stephen's and Oxford, for whom

he has deep affection."

It is appropriate to recall some of the persons who stand out in the leadership of the parish about this time:

Mr. R.H. Lewis (1878-1947) was a long time warden and treasurer of the church and Executive Officer of the Oxford Cotton Mill. He was an able leader — along with his diminutive and dedicated wife, Mary Weldon Lewis (1886-1968), who is remembered by her many Sunday School students with special affection.

Mrs. Julia Horner Cooper (1886-1944) was a devoted life-long member of St. Stephen's. Generations of confirmation classes are indebted to her for her thorough and patient tutoring.

Mrs. Leah Graves Peoples represented the Women of the Church at all levels from the local to the national organization. Her husband, Mr. E.G. Peoples gave frequent and able vestry service.

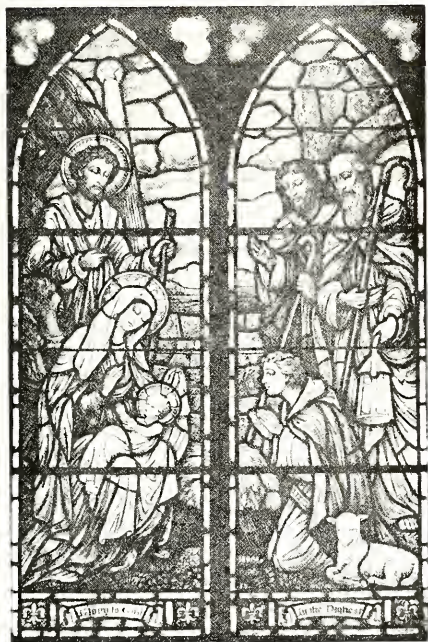
Mr. and Mrs. R. Kennon Taylor gave a life time of dedicated service to the community and church.

We remember: the unselfish dedication of Sunday School teachers Miss Annie Gray Burroughs, Miss Estelle White, Miss Estelle Marr and others; Mrs. Annette Bryan, Mrs. Sue Taylor and Mrs. Susan Adams in the choir; Vera M. Cheatam, Gene Fleming, Mary Powell Hall and Gaither Ballou of the Women's Auxiliary; Mrs. G.W. Hobbs and Mrs. May White Taylor and their work in the Altar Guild; faithful organists Mrs. A.W. Graham, Jr. and Miss Virginia Carroll.

The list of names could go on and on. Certainly there is no attempt to be inclusive of the many lives who found their outlet for Christian service through St. Stephen's, for this is only a sample.

St. Stephen's assisted in sponsoring Mrs. E. G. McSwain as a special teacher of the Bible in the public schools at this time. This was a joint effort of four cooperating churches in Oxford. Chairman of the Oxford School Board at this time was Mr. John Perry Hall. Mr. Hall and Daisy Cooper Hall, his wife of fifty years, have raised six daughters at St. Stephen's and continue stalwart members today.

At this time in our church's history the story of the life of Christ, beautifully depicted in stained glass windows, was nearly completed. Because the names and memorials are too numerous to be given full credit here, a special appendix on Memorial Windows is included in the back of this history.



The life of Christ is depicted by the stained glass windows which surround the nave of the church, from the Nativity to the Supper at Emmaus (above).



The Scout Hut, Built 1947



Later to become the Hut Club
A meeting place for gentlemen of leisure

When building materials became available after the war, special interest was aroused for a new Parish House for church activities but no definite action was taken due to questions of funding.

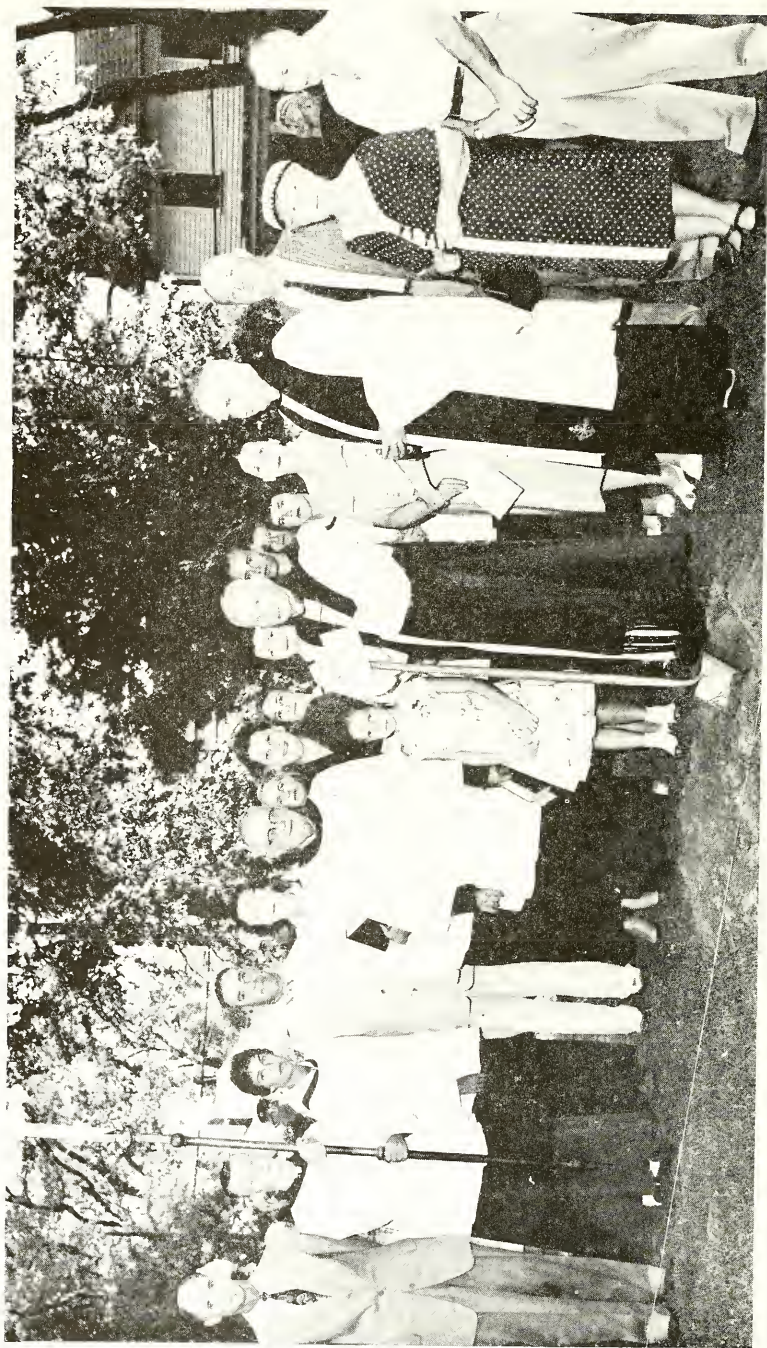
More successful was the building of a scout hut at the rear of the Community House in 1947. The church for a number of years sponsored a scout troop, and it was during the time when Mr. Joe Hamme was scoutmaster that he offered to provide the logs from his farm for the structure and the scouts themselves did much of the work. In 1972 this building was renovated through the generosity of H. Dermont Hedrick as headquarters for the Hut Club, an open organization of retired men of Oxford.

Mr. Johnston accepted a call to Richmond, Virginia in 1948 and was followed by the Reverend Edwin B. Jeffress, a native of Greensboro. He and his family were popular members of the local scene until 1952 when he became Director of Christian Education of the Diocese of North Carolina. As part of this job he was responsible for the operation of Vade Mecum, the summer camp and conference center of the diocese near Winston-Salem. Mr. Jeffress later became Executive Secretary of the Diocese of East Carolina, a post from which he retired in 1980.

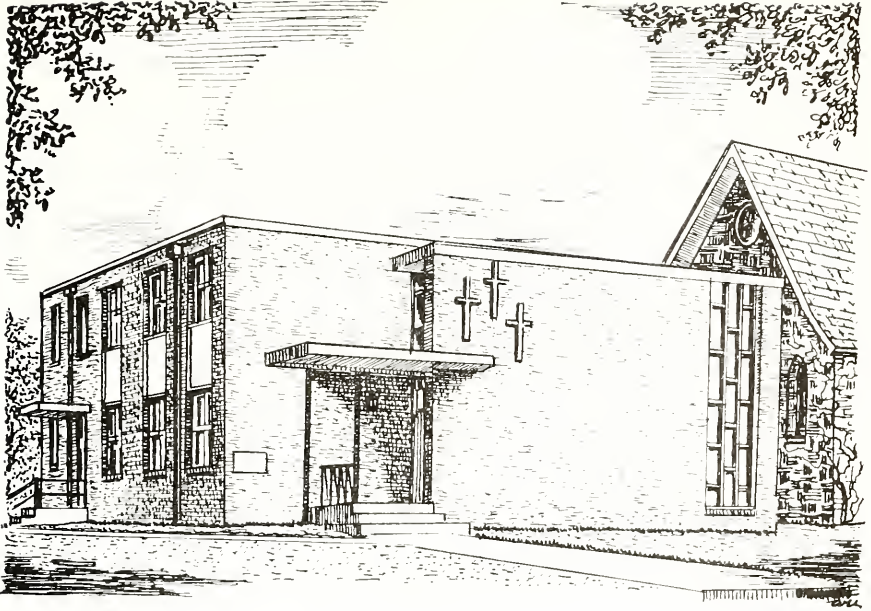
The Cold War had grown into the Korean War and again military attire was the uniform of the day for the sons of St. Stephen's.

On Christmas Day, 1952 the Reverend Alban Richey was called to the rectorship of our church from his post at the Butner Rehabilitation Center. This capable and enigmatic man served the parish for four years, his last charge prior to retiring from the ministry. Following his divorce he married the former Ann Walker and they made their home in Beaufort, N. C.

The Reverend Harry Thomas, a native of Virginia serving a church in New York City, accepted the call to St. Stephen's on July 1, 1956. A bachelor during the first portion of his thirteen year tenure at the church, he then chose Miss Lynette Adcock of Oxford



Ground breaking for the new Parish House, 1958. This was Bishop Penick's (holding shovel) last visit to this parish.



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Parish House



Recognition of the Building Committee for the Parish House, 1959. Left to right: the Rev. Harry Thomas, Joseph Hamme, Sr., C.H. Brewer, Sr., Bishop Baker and T.M. Evins, Sr.

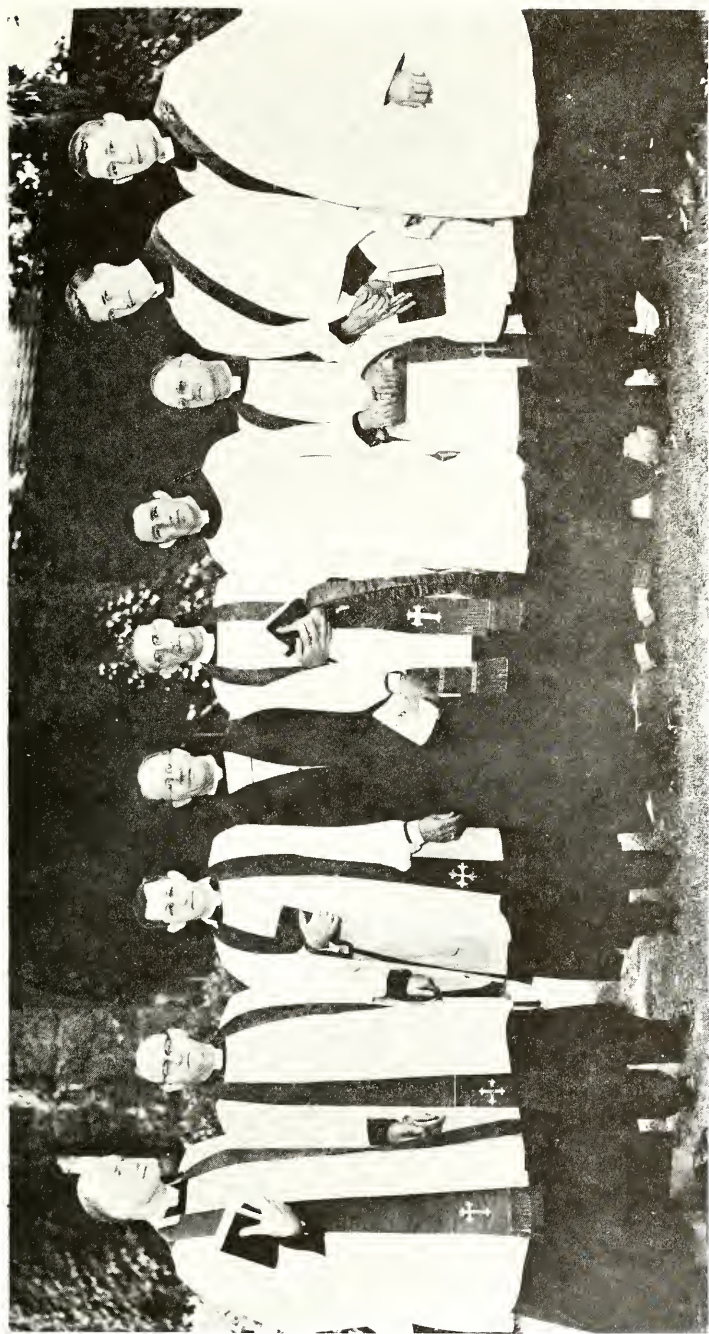
to be his wife.

It was during this period that the hopes of many years became a reality with the construction of the Parish House adjacent to the church. The old Meadows house was torn down to make way for the new building which was designed by the firm of Holloway & Reeves of Raleigh. A building committee composed of Messrs. Charles H. Brewer, chairman; Joseph Hamme, Sr., D. L. Forsythe and M. E. Parham was named. The work was executed by George W. Kane Construction Company at a contract price of \$78,600.

Bishop Penick was present for the ground breaking exercises in 1958. This was to be his last visit to the parish before his death a short time afterwards. He was succeeded by the Rt. Rev. Richard Henry Baker, eighth Bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina. Baker, a native of Norfolk, Virginia, had been named Bishop Coadjutor in 1950. The Diocese of North Carolina now consisted of thirty-nine counties in the central section of the state with 122 Episcopal parishes and some 22,000 communicants. It lends support to three educational institutions: St. Augustine's College and St. Mary's College, both of Raleigh, and the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee.

The Parish House was completed and dedicated by Bishop Baker in 1959; the payment on the mortgage note was to take several years longer. It provided modern quarters for a growing Sunday School, as well as parish offices and an ample assembly room with kitchen facilities. The Community House was turned over to the Oxford Boys Club and later, when unoccupied, was tragically destroyed by fire in the early morning of March 28, 1966.

The grounds of the church property were landscaped in 1961 through the guidance and generosity of Dr. and Mrs. Richard Thornton. The story of how the Richard H. Thornton Library came into being is now part of Oxford lore. Dr. Thornton was teaching the adult Bible class at St. Stephen's of which Mr. Tom Johnson (then Chairman of the Library Board) was also a member. On one very rainy Sunday morning, Tom was the only member of the class present. The talk



AT ORDINATION—Shown are the ministers who were present or assisted in the ordination of the Rev. William David Woodruff, of the Oxford Orphanage, at St. Stephen's, 1955. From left to right: Rev. David Yates, Rev. E.B. Jeffress, Jr., Rev. Henry Johnston, Bishop Richard H. Baker, Rev. Alban Richey, Woodruff, Rev. William Latta, Rev. John S. Spong and Rev. William S. Davis.

drifted away from scripture and to the needs of the local library. Thus the matching grant challenge for our new library was born.

Others active in the life of the parish at this time were George P. Tarry, Senior Warden and Dr. W. G. Woltz, Junior Warden (1959).

Mr. A.W. Garnett rendered meticulous and faithful service as treasurer and clerk of the vestry.

Mrs. C.G. Daniel was organist, and some of the regular choir members are shown in an adjacent picture. These included Mr. Leon Godown, who also served as chairman of the Every Member Canvass.

In 1962 St. Stephen's operated on an annual budget of \$25,000. The condition of the parish was described by Mr. Thomas: "In the past 40 years the communicant strength of St. Stephen's has remained remarkably static. The parish rolls in 1920 show 200 baptized members and 175 communicants. In 1962 there are 269 baptized members and 212 communicants.

This reflects the pattern of education in the parish. With very few exceptions during this period the graduates of the Sunday School have left Oxford to attend college...finding greater opportunity of livelihood elsewhere, most of the young people are lost to Oxford and to St. Stephen's.

During the last two years the advent of several vigorous new industries gives hope that a larger number of new families will move to Oxford and that in an expanding economy more local youths can be induced to remain here."

A wise man once said that you should do two things for a child - give them roots, then give them wings. Certainly if many of St. Stephen's children have taken flight they also found the fertile ground for their roots here in this parish.

One such group that sought to develop their roots was the Senior Church School class of 1962. In the course of their study of church history, they became interested in collecting and compiling information on their home parish. In their search they were particularly indebted to the Reverend R.B. Owens for his written copy of An Historical Sketch of St.



The choir has always been an important part of St. Stephen's.

Stephen's, Oxford, N.C. read to the congregation on June 7, 1902. Also valuable was St. Stephen's Parish - Some Historical Facts Concerning the Parish at Oxford written on the occasion of the centennial anniversary of St. Stephen's Church by the Rev. F.H.T. Horsfield and the personally written history of her beloved church by Mrs. G.W. Hobbs. By combining their sources and findings this class produced what has been our most complete history to date. Members of this class who discovered an aroused appreciation for their heritage were: Evelyn P. Brewer, Catherine W. Duffy, George P. Duffy, Jr., James P. Floyd, III, J. Frank Freeze, Daisy C. Hall, June H. Hall, Henry P. Hall, Jr., Richard A. Hall, Archibald A. Hicks, James H. Horner, Harry B. Williams and Marguerite N. Williams.

As Richard Hall wrote in his version of the history: "We know it is impossible to write a full history of the church without leaving blank the most important thing the church does--the saving of souls. We can list events, statistics and gifts but they are often misleading figures and events. If their work was truly love made visible; if their hearts were their labor and prayer; if the church was carried out into their everyday lives and their work, it can only be written in the "book of life." Of the hundred that have gone before and of ourselves the main effect of the church is "known only to God."

In 1967, following a change in the canons of the church, St. Stephen's elected as its first woman to the vestry, Mrs. Lucy Kimball Brewer. This new responsibility was in recognition of outstanding service throughout her life in all phases of the church, as one of the first presidents of the Diocesan Young Churchmen, Sunday School teacher, adviser to the YPSL, Parish Council, Altar Guild and Women of St. Stephen's, and mother of three children raised at St. Stephen's.

This tradition for active representation of the women of the church on the vestry was continued by Mrs. T.M. Evins, Sr., Mrs. Richard L. Taylor, Mrs. S.S. Royster, Mrs. W.M. Hicks and in more recent years by Mrs. Robert Bryan, Mrs. J.E. Pittard, Jr. and Mrs. R.G. Edmundson.



Junior Choir about 1958

In many ways the 60's were troubled years for our nation and our community. The long Vietnam Conflict was especially difficult for our draft age youth. Again the call to arms went out. This was to be the final call for several young men of Granville County. Gratefully, this was an agony from which the members of our church were spared, but many will carry forever the scars of their bitter experience in Southeast Asia.

This was also a time of civil rights movements throughout the nation and especially in the south. Activists in search of speedy sociological change came into conflict with others over their interpretation of Christian ideals and actions. Ben Chavis, who was raised in an Oxford Episcopal family, became a self-appointed priest of the black civil rights movement. The fire bombing that destroyed several major buildings in Oxford was similar to that which led to his conviction as one of the "Wilmington Ten."

There was controversy within the church over the support of the National Council of Churches and that of the Episcopal Church at all levels for marches and demonstrations and their leadership role in the civil rights crusade.

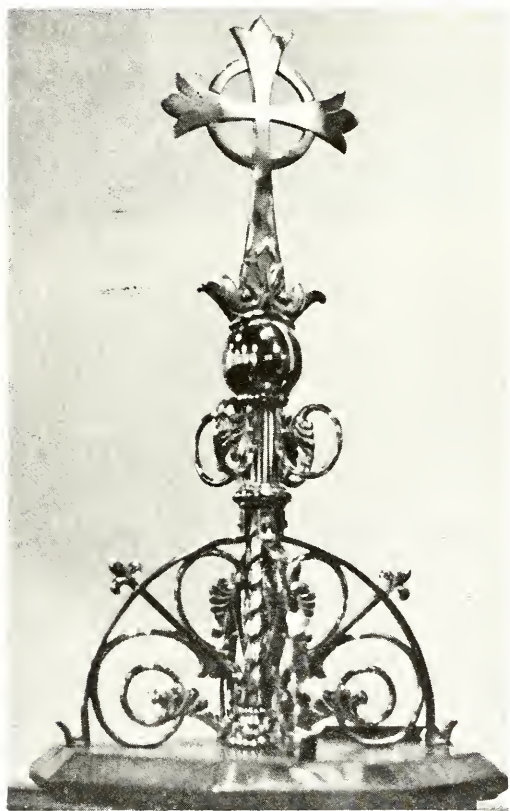
The public school system, some sixty years old in Granville County, was challenged with consolidation, integration and extensive busing. Christian prayers and the teaching of the Bible were no longer permitted in the classroom under the decisions of the Supreme Court. Blacks made up more than 50% of the school age population of Granville County. These changes were a matter of debate and grave concern to the members of St. Stephen's and indeed, to all responsible members of the community. The quality and content of public instruction and discipline in the schools were an open question.

As an alternate to these radical changes within the tax supported school system, private schools were organized in the area and received considerable support from families of the St. Stephen's congregation. One such school was North Granville Academy. The first two headmasters to be hired for this academy

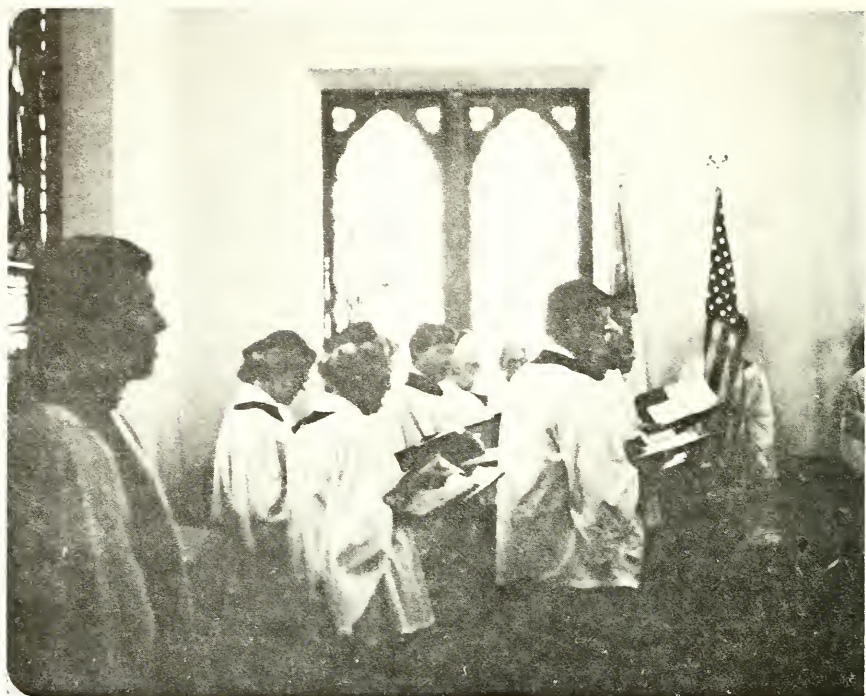
were both members of St. Stephen's Church. Mr. Herb Buttrick was the first, and was then followed by Mr. Phil Whitacre who was particularly active in the church as a notable addition to the church choir.

In more recent years the church has welcomed the Kita family. Michael Kita is headmaster of the Kerr Lake Academy while his wife Betty has taken over the post of church organist and choir director. She followed the tenure of Marsha Lawrence in this dual post.

The Reverend Harry Thomas resigned in December 1969. He accepted a call to serve the church in South Hill and other parishes of Mecklenburg County, Virginia.



Cover on Font



CHAPTER VI

History Is Yesterday — And Today

In September 1970 the Reverend Harrison Thayer Simons, rector of three parishes in King George County, Virginia, accepted the call to St. Stephen's. He was accompanied by his wife, the former Eugenia England and their two children, George and Deanna.

Mr. Simons is the thirty-first rector in the life of St. Stephen's. The church now had 288 baptized members and 192 communicants. The annual budget was about \$32,000 for the operation of the church, double that of 20 years ago. The population of Granville County as recorded by the 1970 census was 32,762.

On the diocesan scene, the Rt. Rev. Thomas Augustus Fraser, Jr., bishop coadjutor since 1960, succeeded Bishop Baker on his retirement.

In November 1971 St. Stephen's celebrated the 70th anniversary of the dedication of our present church building. Perhaps that is what prompted the naming of your present historiographer, who gave the sermon. Members who had shared this entire seventy year period of our history and continued as members at that time were: Miss Sophronia Cooper, Mr. Richard Hamme, Mrs. Lucy Landis Hancock, Mrs. Frances Taylor Harris, Mr. William Thorpe Landis, Mr. Henry Lindsey Taylor and Mrs. May White Taylor.

Participating in the service were Mr. Cameron H. Easton, one of the first members to be baptized in the present church. Also assisting was Miss Sophronia Cooper, one of the first members to be presented for confirmation in the stone church.

It is appropriate that "Miss Sophronia" also be given special recognition as long time librarian and for her work in keeping the books of memorials at St. Stephen's. This book is kept in a case at the rear of the church, where one can find a complete listing of the numerous gifts to the church and their donors.

Also participating in the service was one of the first members to be married in the church, Mrs. Lucy Landis Hancock, wife of F. W. Hancock, Jr. As matriarch of one of the more prolific and prominent families of the community, her children and grandchildren are also well represented in the congregation.

The Rev. Clarence E. Hobgood, a native of Granville County, first entered the ministry of the Episcopal Church at St. Stephen's, Oxford. On February 2, 1971, the rector and a number of the members of this parish, including his sister, Mrs. Henry L. Taylor, attended his consecration as Bishop of the Armed Forces. This was held at the Cathedral Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, our "National Cathedral", in Washington, D . C. In this capacity he assisted the Episcopal Church in bringing its ministry to the men and women of the Armed Forces, in giving pastoral support to the Chaplains, and in cooperating with other churches and agencies for the spiritual well-being of those who wear our country's uniform. At this writing, Bishop Hobgood is retired and with his wife, the former Nell Breedlove, makes his home in Fayetteville. He is a popular visitor to Oxford.

Oxford has long been recognized as one of the leading tobacco centers in the state, and indeed has sent men in that field around the world. "Bright leaf tobacco", produced by curing at high heat, had been discovered by accident through an oversight of men tending the barns near Yanceyville back in 1852. The cured leaf produced by this process was an instant success and was quickly adopted by farmers in the surrounding areas. The first tobacco auction warehouse in North Carolina was begun right here in Oxford by Dr. Leonidas C. Taylor in 1871. The Tobacco Experiment Station, started under the guidance of Eugene G. Moss in 1911 and under his directorship until 1947 for the study of tobacco culture, is located in Oxford.

Suffice it to say that men deriving their livelihood from tobacco have been an ample part of the congregation of St. Stephen's since its earliest days, and continue to be well represented today. Among those in recent memory are:

Al Ballou	Thomas C. Parham
James W. Ballou	E. G. Peoples
L. D. Blackwell, Jr.	C. Wayne Pierce
Charlie Booth	Yancey Robinson
T. M. Evins	George P. Tarry
T. M. Evins, Jr.	William T. Tarry
George B. Evins	A. H. Taylor
Charles Gregory	R. P. Taylor
Robert Garlick	Tom Taylor
Henry P. Hall	C. R. Watkins
Joseph C. Hamme	C. R. Watkins, Jr.

In was in 1972 that the Rt. Rev. W. Moultrie Moore, Jr. suffragan bishop of the diocese, appointed Mr. Simons to also serve as priest-in-charge of St. Cyprian's Church, Oxford. For the preceding year, following the retirement of the Reverend Othello Stanley, Mr. Simons had served as supply priest to the members of this Granville Street congregation. Father Simons, as this mission prefers to call him, continues this joint ministry to the present.

It was also in 1972 that John T. Allen died. Assisted by his wife, Ruby Allen, he had served as sexton of St. Stephen's for seventeen years. He was loved and respected by all the members of our church, as had been Walter Mayo, his predecessor. For faithfulness and devotion John Allen cannot be replaced.

Several evolutions occurred in the Sunday School schedule at this time that are worthy of note. The separate Sunday School hour was dropped in favor of a combined service for adults and children beginning at 10:45 a.m. The teachers and children would then be dismissed during the regular church service for individual class instruction. There was also in-

creased lay reader participation in the service, with one of the lay readers being specially designated to assist with the chalice during communion services. More and more the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, came to be called the Holy Eucharist. Members were encouraged to provide homemade bread and wine for the Sacraments.

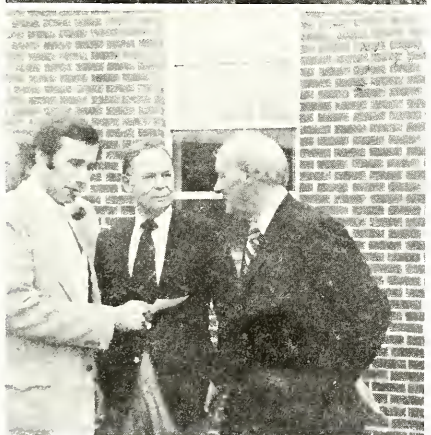
Mr. Maurice Parham, St. Stephen's man for all ages, was superintendent of the Sunday School. The challenge continued to recruit dedicated volunteers to serve as Sunday School teachers. In many classes this was accomplished with the use of a team of two teachers for a class.

Our SESQUICENTENNIAL SERVICE, commemorating 150 years of the life of St. Stephen's Church, was held October 28, 1973. Preacher for the occasion was Nelson Ferebee Taylor, Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a son of St. Stephen's. The festival communion service was followed by a picnic on the church grounds, with recognition of special guests. Joining the eighty families of the church were former ministers Henry Johnston, Jr. and the Reverend David Woodruff, another son of St. Stephen's. Family members of Dr. H.F.T. Horsfield, friends, former members of the congregation and guests attended the celebration. This was a time of special emphasis on heritage as the nation approached its bicentennial year.

A special thanksgiving offering to mark its sesquicentennial year was sent to the Diocese of the Northern Phillipines. This gift, to be used as a scholarship for nurses in training at St. Luke's Hospital, seemed especially appropriate as the nursing school had been founded by Miss Ellen Hicks of this parish. Interest was further stimulated by the visit of the Rt. Rev. Eduardo Longid, the inspiring Episcopal Bishop of the Northern Phillipines.

In 1976 the rector was granted a 60 day sabbatical for study and travel in Europe.

Scenes from 150TH ANNIVERSARY



It was at the General Convention of 1976 that the Proposed Book of Common Prayer was adopted. The congregation at St. Stephen's had experimented with the various suggested forms of worship for several years, from the "green book" to the "zebra book" and numerous mimeographed variations and questionnaires in between. Opinion of the members was about evenly divided between those favoring the 1928 version and those liking some variations to be found in the trial use book. Our services during this period alternated between the two. The resulting confusion was resolved by the Triennial convention of 1979 which adopted the revised version as the official Book of Common Prayer.

Meanwhile, other modifications appeared at St. Stephen's which can generally be called leaning toward "high church." In addition to the weekly mid-week communion and that at the 8 o'clock service, there was an increasing frequency of the eucharist at the regular Sunday morning service. This was accompanied by reading the gospel "in the midst of the people" with torch bearers in attendance. A new Advent wreath came into regular use. The Ash Wednesday Imposition of Ashes, Palm Sunday blessing of the palms and procession and the Easter Vigil service were added to the service schedule. While some change of vestments was noted on the local scene, this was mainly seen on the arrival of the bishop, complete with elaborate mitre and cope.

During the 70's, the celebration of Wednesday morning communion was shifted to the Parish House. There a downstairs room was converted into a small chapel and a number of memorial gifts contributed to its furnishing. Mr. Ed Horner built the rail and the credence cabinet. The carpet was a Taylor memorial and the pews were some of those rescued from the Church of the Heavenly Rest at Middleburg.

Also at this time, the worshipers at St. Stephen's began enjoying the convenience of a paved parking lot on the east side of the church. With the acquisition of the Chapman Lumber Company property adjacent to the church as an addition to our existing holdings, we had a desirable parking lot with

access to both College and McClanahan Streets. This lot was leased to the City of Oxford for week-day use and was available to church members in the evenings and on Sundays. (A plat of the church property is included in the appendix of this book.)

A low stone wall and other landscaping work was done to make this approach to the church more attractive. This stone work, utilizing the last of the material left over from the construction of the church, was done by 74 year old Charlie Bell.

For much of her life, St. Stephen's Church had been literally surrounded by a tobacco warehouse. With the shifting of this symbol of our economy to the more accessible perimeter of Oxford, the large rambling structure was demolished in 1979-1980, giving new vistas for the gothic structure.

It was in 1972 that a new bellows for the organ was given to the church in memory of Nina Horner Manning, first organist of St. Stephen's Church. This memorial was given by her children, one of whom was Miss Mary Manning (1912-1976). Many of the members today remember Mary Manning for her faithful support and participation in the church choir, in spite of a physical handicap. She was a generous contributor to the church during her lifetime, and provided a handsome bequest to the church in her will.

In recent years, the stained glass windows in the church were found in need of repair and preservation. With many of the original contributors providing the funding, these lead and glass treasures have been carefully restored and protected by the installation of unbreakable exterior panels.

The linens of the church are a prized possession. There are many unsung services that go into the life of a parish and one of these is the maintenance of the altar linens, which goes largely unnoticed except by members of the Altar Guild. After many years of skillful and loving care this task was recently relinquished by Mrs. Ed Horner.

On Saturday, March 15, 1980, members of St. Stephen's attended the consecration of the Rt. Rev. Robert W. Estill, bishop coadjutor of the Episcopal

Diocese of North Carolina, at Duke Chapel. Estill, a 52 year old native of Lexington, Kentucky, will assist Bishop Fraser by overseeing churches with membership of less than 300, and will become bishop upon Fraser's retirement or death. The Diocese of North Carolina now covers 39 counties in the center of the state and encompasses 41,000 members in 116 parishes and missions. Bishop Estill was consecrated by the Rt. Rev. John M. Allin, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church.

There are so many activities in the church today that it becomes an impossible task to give proper weight and coverage to each one. Things like the annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper which is catered by the men of the church, bazaars and fashion shows given by the women of the church are only some of the many activities put on by multiple committees. Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets prepared by members have become annual rituals. Beautiful Easter baskets are prepared for the shut-ins of the congregation.

The children, as if by some time-warp magic, progress from Louise Hensgen's nursery class into capable acolytes and youth leaders, then quickly to their own adult destiny.

The life of the church goes on...perhaps the best a history writer can do is give a recital of statistics and let each reader fill in their own special meaning from his own vantage point of time and experience.

Today in the life of St. Stephen's Church we continue under the very busy leadership of the Rev. Harrison T. Simons. In 1980 we will operate on an annual budget of some \$50,000, exclusive of special gifts and memorials.

There are 361 baptized members and 255 active communicants representing 142 households of the Oxford community. In 1979 there was a total attendance of more than 9,000 persons at the worship services of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Oxford, N. C.

We must look with faith to the future as we now enter a new decade.

As one reviews the almost sixteen decades of the life of this Episcopal parish in a small southern community of our "one nation under God," perhaps there are no more fitting words to close this history than those uttered by Mr. Owens when our church was first dedicated:

"Every member hath not the same office and every man not the same gifts but the same Holy Spirit blessed their labors and gave effect and power to the gospel they preached. It matters not now what were the peculiar gifts of the teacher...it matters much in what spirit their teaching was received. We have seen that, in spite of shortcomings and chastenings, God has blessed St. Stephen's, and is blessing her. When the congregation has been united and energetic it has prospered; when there was division and apathy God chastened it. We can easily see His guiding, correcting hand in the history of the parish, and we believe that just now He is pouring out abundant blessings on us. May God continue to pour down on you His choicest blessings; may He fill your hearts with love to Him and His creatures, and a burning zeal to bring all those creatures, wherever they may be found, into fold of His Holy Catholic Church. May He enable you to prove faithful not only in great matters, but in the daily round of everyday duty where it is so easy to fail. And may His Church be so united here in love and good works, in fellowship and prayer, in worship and self dedication, that it will never be separated from, but rather united to, those fellow parishioners who, "having finished their course in faith do now rest from their labors" --- who "were gathered unto their fathers, having the testimony of a good conscience, in the communion of the Catholic Church, in the confidence of a certain faith, in the comfort of a reasonable, religious and holy life, in favor with God, and in perfect charity with the world." All of which we ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."



THE · REMISSION · OF



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This history is made possible because of the accumulated efforts of a great number of people who have shared a love and interest in the Episcopal Church - St. Stephen's in particular. To all of the contributors to, and savers of, this lore for more than a century and a half, I express my special gratitude.

For the sake of readability detailed footnotes and bibliography have been largely omitted, although some appropriate credits have been included in the text.

For their contributions to this history special credit is gratefully extended to:

The many authors of our complete library of parish registers, vestry minutes and other valuable records faithfully compiled and preserved through the years for St. Stephen's Church. These have been placed on microfilm by the N. C. Dept. of Archives in Raleigh.

The Rev. Maurice Vaughan for his compiling and transcribing of the early church records;

The Rev. R.B. Owens for his history of St. Stephen's compiled at the time of the dedication of the new church in 1902;

The Rev. F.H.T. Horsfield for his history prepared in 1923 for our centennial anniversary;

The Rev. Henry Johnston, Jr. for his valuable and detailed scrapbook on his years at St. Stephen's, which he presented to the church in 1973 at the time of the 150th anniversary;

Mrs. G.W. Hobbs for her personal history of St. Stephen's Church;

The Senior Sunday School class of 1962 for their research and compilation of our history to that time;

The Hayes Collection at the Richard H. Thornton Library which has a special volume on the Episcopal Church;

Tom W. Johnson, for his generous photographic contributions to our archives, many of which are found in this history; also countless articles about our church while Editor of the Oxford Public Ledger.

Miss Gertrude Carraway of New Bern, as noted elsewhere, for her example and inspiration as a writer of church history;

Dr. Lawrence London, historiographer of the Diocese, for his capable research through the years on questions of our history, and especially for his encouragement and assistance to this writer;

Davis Smith for his leadership in preserving our stained glass windows, and particularly for compiling the data on these for this book.

Finally, a special debt of gratitude to my wife, Mary Ann, who edited and typed the full text of this history, - for her continuing patience with and assistance to this author.

In the early chapters, special reference seemed appropriate to attribute accuracy. These references are footnoted as follows:

CREDITS

- 1] Gertrude S. Carraway: Historic Christ Church
- 2] Joseph F. Freeman, III: Up From Independence
- 3] William S. Powell: North Carolina, A History
- 4] Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Vol. XLI
- 5] Gertrude S. Carraway: Crown of Life
- 6] The Rev. F.H.T. Horsfield: Historical Sketch
- 7] Henry Lewis: Northampton Parishes
- 8] Bishop Cheshire: Address to the Diocesan Convention of 1916 in Henderson, N. C.
- 9] Journals of the Diocese of North Carolina

In closing, one final acknowledgement, from the Rev. R. B. Owens who said:

"Wise men recognize the truth that history bears witness to God.

It is well to go over the past occasionally...self examination is an aid to gratitude and faith.

So, too, the history of a church, a congregation, bears clear testimony to the presence of God in that church. If we could but learn to see God in history, understand that it is the record of his dealings with the world, the church, and man, "dry" history would be interesting enough.

Taking this church from the time of its feeble beginning in the early days of the 19th century, and following step by step, in sunshine and shadow, in prosperity and adversity, the Savior's promise has indeed been fulfilled, "Lo, I am with you all the days."

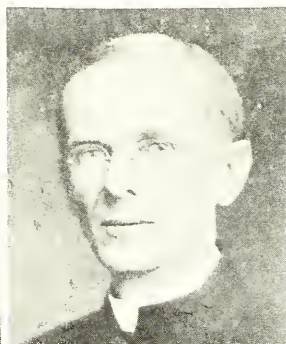
APPENDIX A

RECTORS OF ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH OXFORD, N. C.

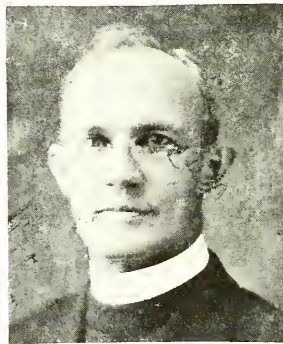
William Mercer Green	1822
William Shaw	1832-33
T. S. W. Mott	1834-36
William Thurston	1838
Lewis Taylor	1841-44
Edwin Greer	1845-48
J. J. Ridley	1849-53
Robert Sutton	1854-58
E. W. Gilliam	1859-60
J. B. Calhoun	1860-63
M. H. Vaughan	1863-70
P. D. Thompson	1871-74
M. H. Vaughan (2nd tenure)	1875-82
F. L. Bush	1882-84
James Baird, D. D.	1884
J. Y. Gholson, D. D.	1884-85
L. W. Rose	1885-87
W. W. Walker	1888-92



Edward Benedict
1893-1895



James F. Plummer
1895-1897



Robert Bruce Owens
1897-1903

George M. Tolson

1904-1905

F.W. Hilliard

1906-1907



F.H.T. Horsfield
1907-1926



Reuben Meredith
1927-1934



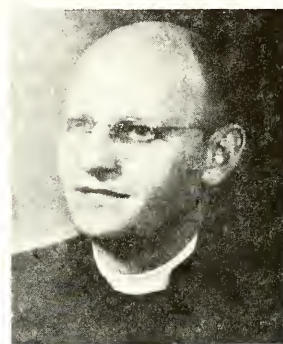
Albert E. Sanderson
1935-1938



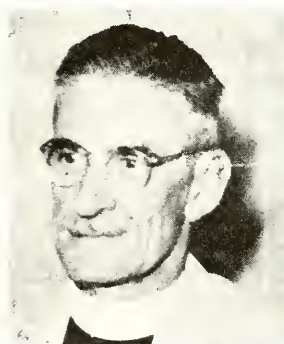
C. Alfred Cole
1938-1941



Henry Johnston, Jr.
1942-1948



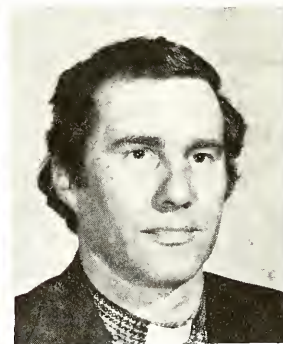
Edwin B. Jeffress, Jr.
1949-1952



Alban Richey
1953-1956



Harry Thomas
1956-1969



Harrison T. Simons
1970-

APPENDIX B

MINISTERS AND MISSIONARIES FROM ST. STEPHEN'S

Members from St. Stephen's who entered Holy Orders:

Lewis Taylor

Benjamin Skinner Lassiter

Junius Moore Horner - later Bishop of Western
Carolina

F. A. Fetter

Goeffrey Horsfield

Lewis N. Taylor

Clarence E. Hobgood - Suffragan Bishop for the
Armed Forces, Retired

William David Woodruff

Missionaries from St. Stephen's:

Ellen Thomas Hicks - Missionary nurse to the
Phillipines and Puerto Rico,
establishing nursing schools
at St. Luke's Hospitals in
both places. Retired in 1938.

Mary E. Horner - Valle Crusis Mission School near
Boone, N. C.

Mrs. Charles Pratt, nee Pattie Ward - Missionary
to Korea

APPENDIX C

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH OXFORD, N. C.

COLONIAL PERIOD	Inhabitants of Granville County, St. John's Parish, were served by missionary ministers of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel of the Anglican Church under British rule.
1789	Protestant Episcopal Church formed with first General Convention at Christ Church, Philadelphia.
1817	Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina organized.
1823	St. Stephen's Church, Oxford (incorporated in 1816) admitted into union with the Diocese.
1833	First church building erected, with a congregation of some 16 families. Church enlarged and improved in 1854 and 1884.
1867	First rectory built.
1901	New stone church completed and used for first regular service November 17. Building dedicated at Diocesan Convention 1902.
1923	Last Diocesan Convention held in Oxford. Three earlier meetings were held here in 1842, 1884 and 1902. Our centennial year.
1927	Community House deeded to St. Stephen's. New rectory completed.

- 1959 New Parish House dedicated.
- 1971 St.Stephen's celebrated 70th anniversary of present church.
- 1973 St.Stephen's celebrated 150 years with Sesquicentennial service.
- 1979 New Book of Common Prayer authorized.
Stained glass window restoration completed.

APPENDIX D

RECENT WARDENS OF ST. STEPHEN'S

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>SENIOR WARDEN</u>	<u>JUNIOR WARDEN</u>
1959	George P. Tarry	W. G. Woltz
1960	Leon Godown	Joseph Hamme, Sr.
1961	Leon Godown	Joseph Hamme, Sr.
1962	F. L. Walker, III	C. M. Booth
1963	E. C. Horner	Doc. L. Forsythe
1964	R. K. Taylor	Joseph C. Hamme
1965	George P. Tarry	C. M. Booth
1966	C. H. Easton	E. C. Horner
1967	C. H. Easton	Joseph C. Hamme
1968	Joseph C. Hamme	C. R. Watkins, Jr.
1969	Joseph C. Hamme	W. Ray Mann
1970	E. F. Taylor	Doc. L. Forsythe
1971	E. S. Powell	Doc. L. Forsythe
1972	Doc. L. Forsythe	Joseph C. Hamme
1973	Henry P. Hall	Alex H. Hancock
1974	Tom Evins, Jr.	Alex H. Hancock
1975	John Reid Davis	Alex H. Hancock
1976	John Tyson	David L. Mathews
1977	John Tyson	J. P. Floyd, Jr.
1978	H. Dermont Hedrick	Alex H. Hancock
1979	H. Dermont Hedrick	W. Ray Mann
1980	Alex H. Hancock	C. H. Brewer, Jr.

APPENDIX E

1980

CHURCH DIRECTORY

The Rev. Harrison T. Simons, Rector

Rectory Phone: 693-8517 — Parish House Phone: 693-5547

Mr. Alex H. Hancock, *Senior Warden* Phone 693-3931
Mrs. Mary Ann Brewer, *Parish Secretary* 693-5423
Mr. M. Bruce Smith, *Parish Treasurer* 693-6216

VESTRY

Michael Kita
Dermont Hedrick
Cissie Bryan
Alex Hancock

Heilig Pittard
Ray Mann
Mary Ruth Edmundson
Joseph Carr Hamme

Bruce Smith
Charles Brewer
Thomas Moore Evins, Jr.
A. H. A. Williams

THE WOMEN OF ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH

Mrs. Margo Acomb, *President*
Mrs. Gene Simons, *Vice-President*
Mrs. Mary Ann Brewer, *Secretary* Mrs. Frances Mann, *Treasurer*

CHURCH SCHOOL

Mr. Allie Ellington, *Superintendent* Mrs. Louise Hensgen, *Nursery Director*

CHURCH MUSIC

Mrs. Betty Kita, *Organist and Choir Director*
Choir Directors: Mrs. Billie Parham,
Mrs. Lucy Royster, Mrs. Heilig Pittard

ALTAR GUILD

Chairman, Mrs. Lucy Royster *Secretary,* Mrs. Dorothy Horner
Vice-President, Mrs. Heilig Pittard *Treasurer,* Mrs. Sarah Johnson

LICENSED LAY READERS

J. P. Floyd, Jr. M. Bruce Smith

ACOLYTES

William Tarry, *Advisor*

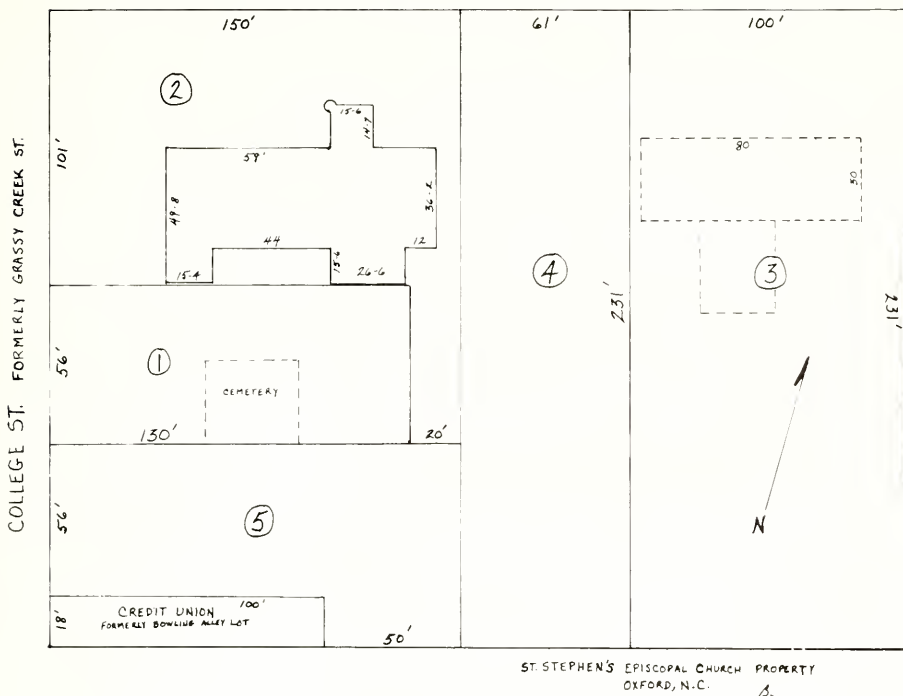
EPISCOPAL YOUNG CHURCHMEN

President, Charles Brewer III *Vice-President,* Lorie Tyson
Secretary, Jennifer Chrestensen *Treasurer,* Billy Paynter

SEXTON: Mrs. Ruby Allen, 693-5958

APPENDIX F

McCLANAHAN ST. FORMERLY GOSHEN ST. + PENN AVE.



ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH PROPERTY
OXFORD, N. C.

- [1] Original lot no. 21 of the Oxford Episcopal Church (1813 and 1832)
- [2] Corner Church lot. Deed book 48, page 512. (1894)
- [3] Community House lot. Deed book 88, page 64. (1927)
- [4] Meadows property. Deed book 93, page 6. (1932)
- [5] Chapman property. Deed book 156, page 220. (1962)

These deeds are normally listed to the "Wardens and Vestry of St. Stephen's Protestant Episcopal Church".

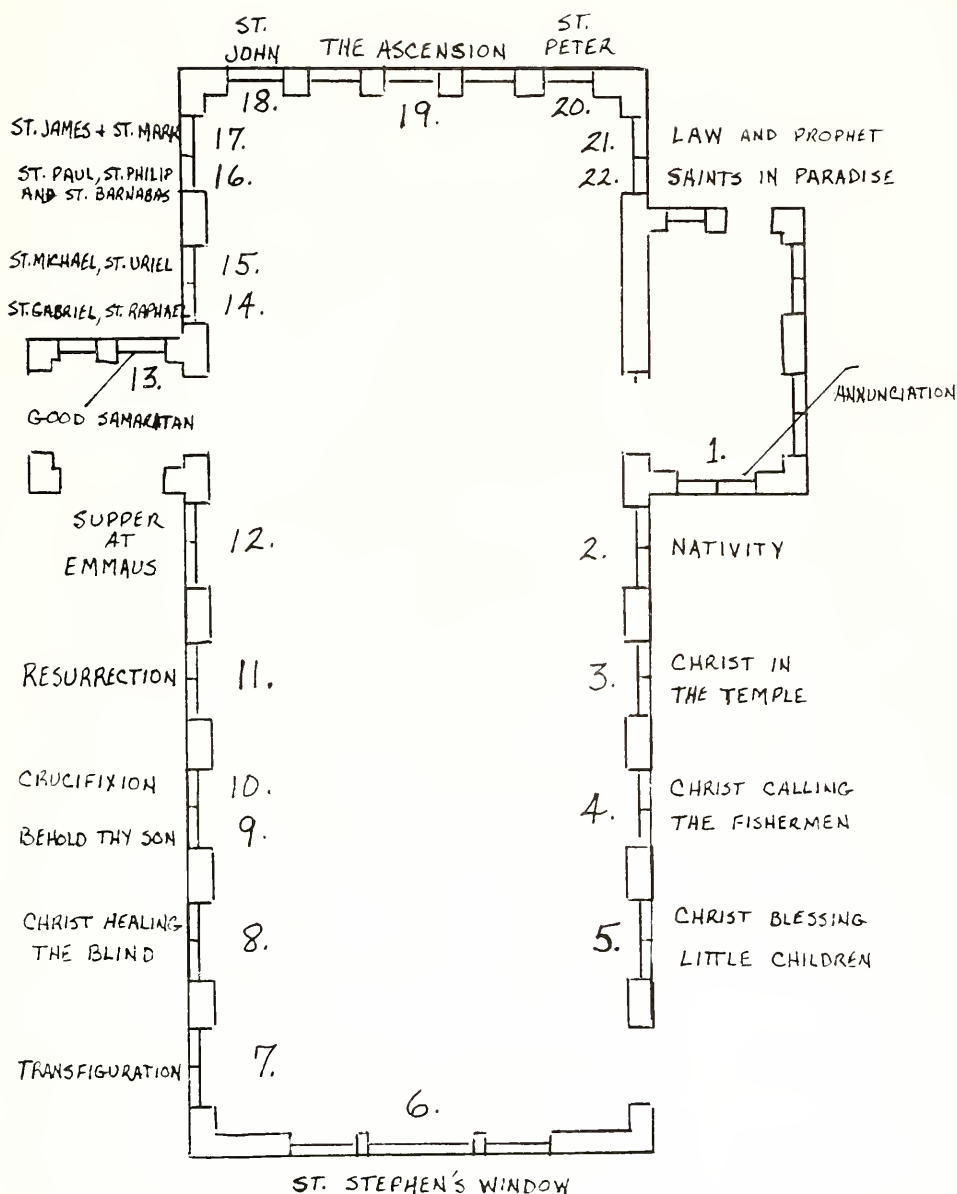
APPENDIX G

Memorial Windows at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Oxford, N.C.

Unless otherwise noted, the restoration of the windows and protective lexan coverings completed in 1979 were the generous gifts of the original donors or their families.

<u>KEY</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>MEMORIAL</u>
1	The Annunciation (ordered May 1980)	Robert Gilliam Lassiter Margaret Currin Lassiter Robbie Gilliam Hedrick Robert Jerome Hedrick
2	The Nativity	Mrs. H. G. Cooper
3	Christ in the Temple	In memory of her grandparent, mother and brother by Charlotte Britt Hobbs
4	Christ Calling the Fishermen	John Green Hall
5	Christ Calling the Little Children	Mary Spencer Pendleton Davis by Luther Hunt Davis
6	St. Stephen's Window (Restoration and lexan covering in 1977 -	Henry A. Taylor Lydia Ann Taylor Mary Anna Taylor Robbie Gilliam Hedrick Robert Jerome Hedrick
7	The Transfiguration	Henry Alley Taylor
8	Christ Healing the Blind	Hannah Miriam Kennerly by Mrs. Edna Kennerly
9	Woman Behold Thy Son	Lucy Landis Hancock
10	The Crucifixion	Edward Ballou Abbitt Pace Barnes Abbitt
11	The Resurrection	James Archibald Taylor Maria Louisa Taylor James Littlejohn Taylor David Kerr Taylor William Beasley Taylor Edward Winfield Taylor by Clifton & Lena T. Robards

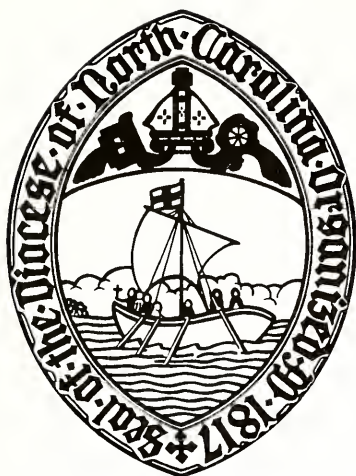
23.



12	The Supper at Emmaus	Thomas George Taylor Mildred Kennon Taylor Lewis Nathaniel Taylor 1889 - Priest - 1947	
13	The Good Samaritan	Estelle Herndon White Thomas White IV	
14	St.Gabriel & St.Raphael	Virginia Clair Carroll Organist 1921-1944	
15	St.Michael & St.Uriel	Betsy Cheek Hall	
16	St.Paul, St. Philip & St. Barnabas	Mary Weldon Lewis	
17	St. James & St. Mark	Richard Henry Lewis	
18	St. John	Mary Ellen Horner	
19	The Ascension	Bennett Hester Gregory by Mrs. Roger O. Gregory, Mrs. Thornwell Lanier and Misses Fannie and Jeannette Gregory	
	Restoration and lexan covering in memory of --	James W. Ballou Cameron H. Easton	
20	St. Peter	Mistress Elizabeth Kyle	
21	The Law & The Prophets (Moses & Elijah)	Albert Henry Taylor Mary White Taylor	
22	Saints in Paradise	The Rev. F. H. T. Horsfield	
23	Round Window above Ascension	(names listed below--)	
	Annie G. Hunt	Sarah R. Hall	Lucy H. Graham
	Annie S. Booth	Sophonra M. Horner	Mary R. Delacroix
	Fannie C. Medford	Jennette C. Elliott	Letty K. Lassiter
	Janie O. Hunt	Susan W. Hall	Marianne M. Horsfield
	Eloise K. Horner	Hannah B. Pinnix	Katherine H. Hilliard
	Carrie S. Easton	Martha G. Ferebee	Minnie P. Winston
	Eleanor P. Jeffreys	Delia B. Bonitz	Mariana T. Landis
	Bettie G. Powell	Mary W. Graham	Louise C. Jeffreys

APPENDIX H

THE BISHOPS OF NORTH CAROLINA



SEAL OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH CAROLINA

Adopted by the convention of 1890 and as improved in 1914, the seal is in the shape of a pointed oval. The boat displaying the standard of St. George represents John White, grandfather of Virginia Dare, arriving on the Carolina coast. At the top is shown a bishop's mitre, crosier and key.

† John Stark Ravenscroft
Diocesan (1823—1830)

† Levi Silliman Ives
Diocesan (1831—1853)

† Thomas Atkinson
Diocesan (1853—1881)

† Theodore B. Lyman
Coadjutor (1873—1881)
Diocesan (1881—1893)

† Joseph Blount Cheshire
Coadjutor (1893)
Diocesan (1893—1932)

† Henry B. Delaney
Suffragan (1918—1928)

† Edwin Anderson Penick
Coadjutor (1932)
Diocesan (1932—1959)

† Richard Henry Baker
Coadjutor (1950—1959)
Diocesan (1959—1965)

† Thomas Augustus Fraser, Jr.
Coadjutor (1960—1965)
Diocesan (1965—)

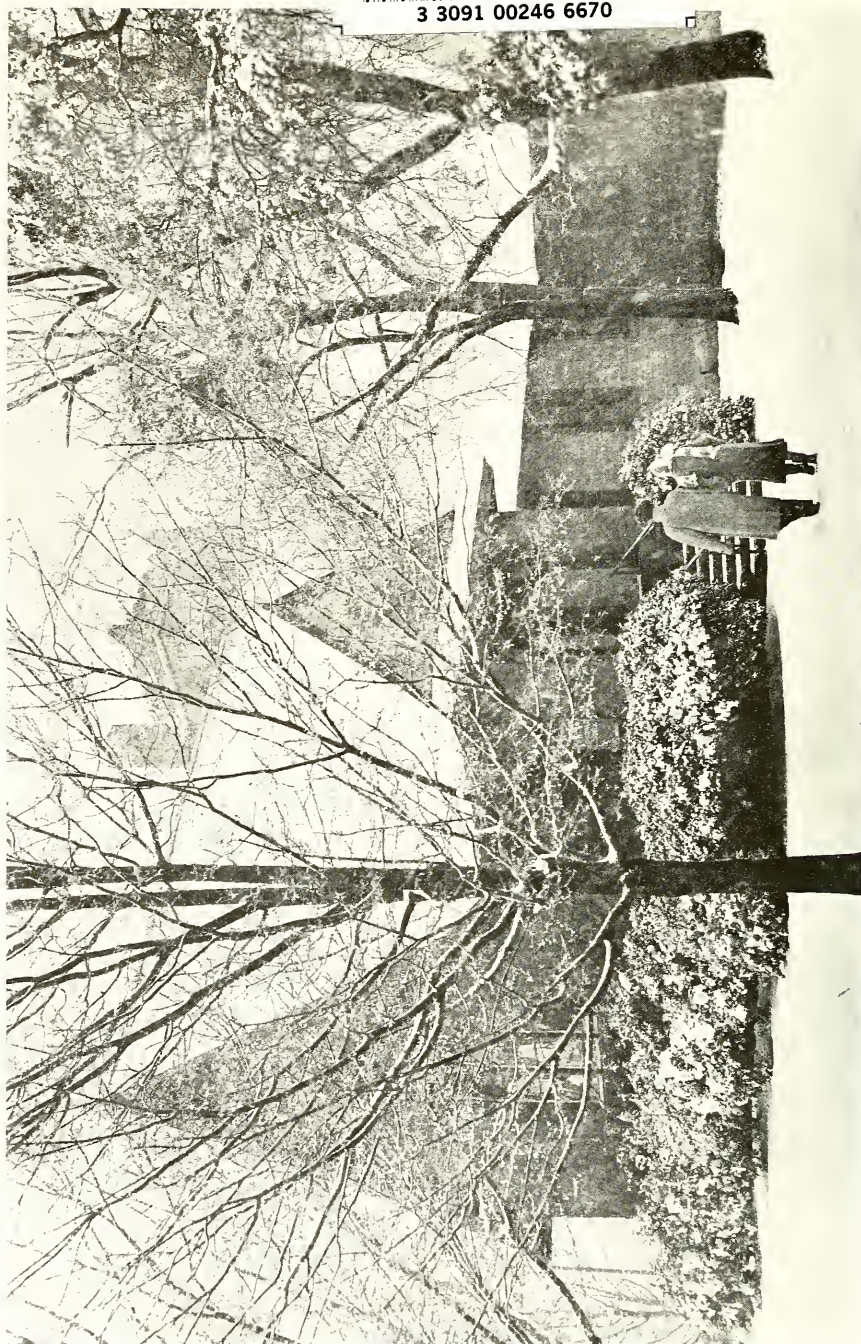
† William Moultrie Moore, Jr.
Suffragan (1967—1975)

† Robert Whitridge Estill
Coadjutor (1980—)

Brewer, Charles H.
A history of St. Stephen's Episcopal Chu



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for

It is in giving..... that we receive,
It is in pardoning, that we are pardoned,
It is in dying..... that we are born to
eternal life.

St. Francis.

